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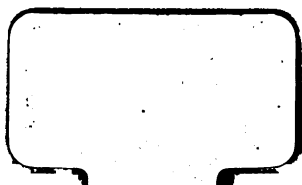
Life Beyond the Grave.



3/-



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Life Beyond the Grave,

described by

A SPIRIT,

THROUGH A WRITING MEDIUM.



LONDON:

E. W. ALLEN, 11 AVE MARIA LANE, E.C.

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PREFACE

BY THE WRITING MEDIUM.

MOST persons will admit that a preface to the following pages is required in order that their alleged spiritual origin may as far as possible be substantiated. They are stated to be a spirit communication; and, since nine persons out of ten will naturally ridicule that idea and prefer to attribute them to the wanderings of a disordered brain, I will endeavour to state here a few facts, by way of proving that the writer has not quite lost his sanity, and that he is likewise free from the charge of conscious imposition. How far unconscious imposition or "unconscious cerebration" may be adequate to explain their origin, I must leave the reader to judge of for himself. I should have been glad if I could have ventured to subscribe my own name and address as a further guarantee that they are not the result of a deliberate attempt to deceive the reader; but, in these days, the social position of a person who is suspected of holding communication with the other world is, in some parts of England, anything but enviable. Socially, such a person is avoided; and all belonging to him come under the same stigma. This I already know by experience,

and, for these reasons, I prefer to give the following pages to the world anonymously.

Most persons have heard of Planchette; but, for the benefit of those who have not, I may say that it consists of a miniature wooden table, about the size of an ordinary breakfast plate, mounted on three legs, two of which run upon small wheels, and the third terminates in the point of a lead pencil. This instrument is placed upon a sheet of white paper, and the hands of the sitter rest lightly upon it. If the person be mediumistic, planchette begins to move in ten or fifteen minutes, and the pencil traces marks or letters upon the surface of the paper. These are found to be intelligible words and sentences, frequently quite independent of any thought or will on the part of the sitter, or "medium," as he may be called. Not unfrequently the names of deceased persons are written out, and messages professing to come from them are found written on the paper. In some cases the communications seem to be limited to the thought and knowledge of persons present; in other cases, facts have been communicated which no one present was acquainted with, and which have subsequently been verified through other sources.*

To make the origin of the following pages quite clear, I may state broadly that they were written by the same agency that writing is obtained through planchette; and the circumstances under which they came to be written are as follows :

* Planchettes can be obtained from J. Stormont, 59 Constitution Hill, Birmingham.—(*See Advt. at the end.*)

About ten years ago, I purchased a planchette and tried to get writing by its agency, but failed. I subsequently became interested in Spiritualism; and from personal investigation and a perusal of the literature of the movement, I soon became convinced that it was based upon *facts*. My personal experience was confined to the phenomena observed through various mediums. In myself I failed to develop the least trace of mediumship, either through table turning or planchette writing, until the summer of 1874, when I accidentally came in contact with an American medium who was reputed to have the power of developing mediumship in others. This person mesmerised my hand and arm—she never succeeded in mesmerising the brain—and the result was, that when I placed my hand on planchette I felt a dragging motion in the instrument, as if some invisible power were gently drawing it over the surface of the paper, uncontrolled by me. The result was a name professing to be that of a deceased person. This was followed by intelligible communications relating to the person named; and finally, as the facility of writing increased with the aid of the developing medium, I was able to get long and interesting messages professing to come from departed spirits. Considering that I had for years been unable to induce the slightest movement in planchette, and that the messages related to facts and theories not within my own knowledge and not emanating from my own thoughts, I was not a little surprised at this startling development of occult power. I soon found that

planchette was an impediment rather than an advantage to my progress as a writing medium, and that I could get on much more rapidly by simply holding the pencil in the hand and keeping the mind and the muscles of the arm perfectly passive.

Under these circumstances my hand would be involuntarily moved to write without the use of planchette, and I soon exhausted my curiosity by propounding endless questions to the supposed spirit touching the present, the past, and the future. Like many novices in spiritual investigations, I imagined a spirit would necessarily be omniscient, and I speedily became exceedingly credulous and prepared to swallow anything that might be written.

In the first blush of enthusiasm for this new gift, I fondly imagined I should be able to convince all my friends to the truth of Spiritualism without difficulty; and the communicating spirit who had given me long and interesting messages touching the mode and conditions of life in the spirit world, and had to some extent gained my confidence, promised to astonish my friends by predicting their futures, besides conveying messages from their departed relatives. He also predicted events of great public interest, which I was advised to publish.

With these promises before me, I went in boldly for convincing my friends; but, with the first attempt, my anticipation of mediumistic fame came to an untimely end, and I found that it was—if not all vanity and vexation of spirit, in all probability something worse. All my

“predictions” turned out to be lies, and I gave up writing mediumship in disgust, and vowed that, however true it might be as a fact, there was no reliance to be placed upon the veracity of spirits.

About six months after these experiences I was induced to try another developing medium — Mrs. Woodforde,* whose speciality was said to be the development of writing mediumship and the removal of undesirable spirit influences. Mrs. Woodforde I found to be a lady of education and refinement, and her own experience and advice explained much to me that had been mysterious, and proved to be most useful and valuable in avoiding for the future the dangers I had so narrowly escaped in the past. These dangers cannot be too sufficiently kept in view by persons who dabble in mediumship. Unless the mediumship is developed under good auspices in the first instance, and guarded with extreme care, there is the greatest risk of the medium becoming the dupe of frivolous and deceitful spirits, who abound in the other world as much as in this. If the medium will abandon the popular error that a spirit is a superior being, instead of being just as human and fallible as himself, he will estimate the communications at their proper value, instead of receiving them with abject credulity, as is too frequently the case. It is, in

* Her address is generally to be found advertised in the columns of *The Spiritualist*, published by E. W. Allen, 11 Ave Maria Lane, London, E.C.; or *The Medium*, published by James Burns, 15 Southampton Row, London, W.C.

consequence of this foolish notion, that many persons give up communicating through planchette, on the assumption that it is diabolical; because, having asked foolish questions, they have induced foolish replies.

After a week's sittings with Mrs. Woodforde I found myself in complete possession of my former power of unconscious writing, but the character of the communications had entirely changed. Formerly they were of the earth earthy, and reflected my own state of mind to some extent. Now they impressed me with their greater purity, benevolence, and truthfulness.

This change, I was told, was attributable to the removal by Mrs. Woodforde's invisible friends—of the disagreeable influences by which I was formerly surrounded. Be that as it may, I found that the messages now written breathed nothing but good advice, whereas formerly their tendency was sometimes evil. Feeling more confidence in the trustworthiness of the messages, I re-commenced my writing experiences, and amongst other communications I received the series of messages which are reproduced in the following pages, and which are said to describe the Life beyond the Grave.

It may probably be urged by many readers of these pages that, even if the *bona fides* of the writer be admitted, there is no proof that he has not unconsciously reproduced thoughts and ideas which he has met with at various times in his course of reading in spiritual literature. This objection is the only alternative to the assumption that the

following pages are a deliberate fraud on the part of the writer ; and, in reply to the former objection,—the value of which I am far from depreciating—I can only say that the whole of the following pages were written without the least previous thought on my part, and with my mind kept as passive as possible; that most of the facts and theories therein stated were quite new to me when written, and seemed, in many instances, so absurd and contradictory that I objected to them at the time, but received answers to my objections through my own hand. Thus, the following pages, to some extent, contain internal evidence of their originating externally to my own brain. Another curious fact may here be mentioned. I was frequently compelled to write such sentences as “*no more to-day,*” “*you have written enough now,*” &c., at a time when I was anxious and willing to go on writing. The communications would then cease.

So great was my own scepticism touching the truthfulness of the facts communicated, that for eighteen months I have withheld them from publication, in order that I might ascertain from other sources whether the “life beyond the grave,” here described, coincided with the revelations through other mediums. In the main, I have reason to believe they do ; and I have therefore decided that I ought not to withhold them from publication any longer, but give them to the world for what they are worth. If they *are* reliable, their value to mankind cannot, I think, be doubted. Whether owing to my hesitation about publish-

ing, or to other causes, it is certainly curious—and goes not a little way to explain their extraordinary origin—that upon the completion of this series of communications, the power to write, as distinctly as I then wrote, seemed to leave me, and I have since been able to write (involuntarily) little or nothing. The sudden acquisition of this power of involuntary writing—when I had formerly failed in all my attempts to induce it—is also, in itself, quite as remarkable a circumstance as its subsequent withdrawal. Whether the public will consider the following pages worth reading remains to be seen. For the present I prefer to subscribe myself simply as

THE WRITING MEDIUM.



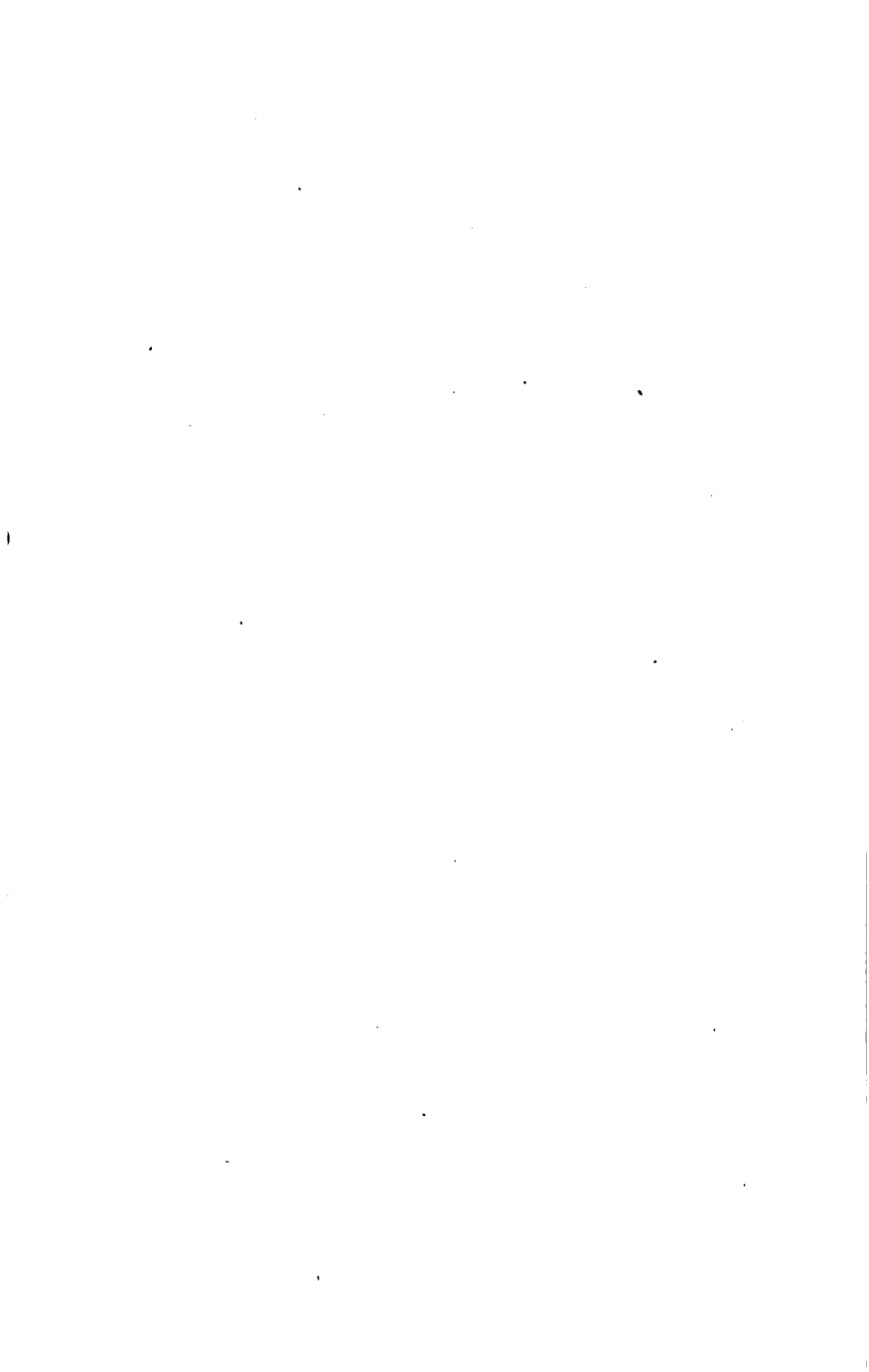
PREFACE

BY THE COMMUNICATING SPIRITS.

IN presenting the following pages to the notice of the public we, the inspiring intelligences, disclaim, on the part of the writer of the communications herein contained, all the responsibility for their contents. He has himself explained how they came to be written, and what his share in their production has been. We have simply used him as our medium for conveying to the world some information on topics that are of vast importance to mankind, and of which they cannot, by ordinary channels of information, acquire any knowledge. That they contain statements which may be disputed or doubted, even by spiritualists and spirits also, is quite possible, since all men do not think alike and neither do they see alike; and there are many men in the spirit world who do not understand the conditions by which they are surrounded, and the laws which govern their own state. We do not claim infallibility ourselves, and if we have set down anything which is not clear or intelligible, we shall be happy to answer any questions that may be sent to the writer, through whom we have been able to express ourselves.*

Having said this much for the origin of the following pages, we will leave them to speak for themselves.

* He may be communicated with by addressing—Care of the Printer.



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LIFE BEYOND THE GRAVE.

A SPIRIT COMMUNICATION.

WE will first try to describe the way in which we write through your hand and the appearance which you present to our eyes.

To begin with ; you appear to us like a double man. We see the physical body precisely the same as you see yourself, only, instead of being solid and material, it is transparent and shadowy to our eyes, and we see you seated on a transparent or shadowy chair, surrounded by shadowy papers, and equally shadowy furniture ; in fact, you present the appearance of a ghost to us. So much for the physical body and its material surroundings. Your *savans*, who imagine that there is nothing but matter, may perhaps be surprised to hear that there is a spiritual duplicate or counterpart (we will call it a counterpart) of the foregoing objects, including yourself, and that this counterpart, though spiritual from your point of view, and therefore invisible to your senses, is tangible and *material* to our touch. The physical body and material objects are not, however, distinct from their spiritual counterparts, but are interblended, the former being attached to the latter by a sort of silvery thread,

which causes them virtually to be one inseparable substance so long as this spiritual tie is maintained. When, however, by the death of the physical body, the spiritual counterpart becomes independent of the former, it begins to exist alone, and so also with the furniture, &c. When the spiritual tie is severed which attaches your articles to their spiritual counterparts, the latter can be displaced and moved away, and becomes thenceforth, in the spirit world, separate and distinct objects. The spiritual counterpart being to us the most material, of course conceals, for the time being, the material object from our view. The latter *per se* offers, of course, no impediment to our movements being transparent to our senses, but the spiritual object, whether connected or disconnected, impedes our locomotion, and requires to be displaced before we can pass. Thus, you see, that in entering your rooms we have to come in through the door like other human beings. We do not care to break through your walls, or come in at the window, or through the ceiling, though we are aware that such is reputed to be the orthodox mode of locomotion in our world. Since we told you the spiritual counterpart of your walls and your doors is solid to our senses, of course we must either open the door or break through. The latter we can do if we like; not by physical force, as with you, but by the exercise of will-power, which answers the same purpose with us, where the strongest man is he who has the most powerful will. You do not see why we should hesitate to adopt the first-named mode of entrance

and come in through the wall, if it suits us and can be so easily accomplished, as we suggested; but you must understand that we do not care to injure what does not belong to us. You can, if you like, break through your friend's window, but you do not do so for the same reason. You think there can be no analogy, because, in the first place, we have presumably no police, and, in the second place, a hole in the spiritual counterpart of your wall, or even the entire destruction of the spiritual house, could not make the slightest difference to your material house. It is quite true that it would make no perceptible difference to you, but it would do so to us, for we should not be able to be in your company with the same convenience that we now have. The holes in the spiritual counterpart of your wall, or the total destruction of the spiritual counterpart of your house, would cause us much inconvenience in our visits to you, and prevent our enjoying any privacy in your society. You cannot understand this because you ignore the fact that the life in the spirit world on the earth plane is very little different to your life.

Since there is a spiritual counterpart to your body and your furniture, so also is there to all other bodies and all other furniture; and since death detaches the bodies of men from their physical frames, they are then free to go and come where they choose, and might cause us much annoyance and inconvenience by intruding upon you when they were not wanted. In short, the spiritual counterpart of your house acts as a protection to you against the intrusion of evil spirits,

who, being more limited in their powers of locomotion than higher spirits, cannot annoy you so easily when you are protected by walls. You are right in saying that will-power would serve them to break through such barriers also, and they could open the doors and enter in that way; but there is no inducement to do so when they know nothing of the contents, and do not feel specially attracted. They do not care to enter all dwellings merely from curiosity, as that weakness is soon satiated in the spirit world, so they could only be attracted by seeing something novel, just the same as a crowd would be attracted in your world by seeing part of a house pulled down and the interior exposed. You see, therefore, that things are very much the same in our world as in yours, and people are moved by precisely the same motives, excepting that, there being not the same conditions, the motives find expression in different modes.

We have alluded to the possibility of the material objects being separated from their spiritual counterparts, and the latter continuing to exist alone. As you will see hereafter, this is effected by a special exercise of the will which renders the article thenceforth a separate article of property in the spirit world available for our use. Thus we can, and do, detach the chairs in your room temporarily from the material counterpart when we wish to sit down on one, and the material chair happens to be occupied by some spiritual being or things, as for instance, your spiritual body, when you are seated in it. When you are so sitting in a chair we can detach the spiritual counter-

part of the chair and use it ourselves. You ask, would not that cause your spiritual body to fall to the ground? No, certainly not; because, being attached to your material body, it follows your motions, and is independent of external conditions in the spirit world, at least while you are awake. You do not see why we should require chairs, but we are subject to the same laws of gravity that you are, and must be supported also. As a rule, will-power is sufficient to sustain us, yet we are liable to be fatigued as well as you, and require occasional rest, though we do not sleep. The special exercise of will-power required to detach a spiritual article from its material counterpart is not available for all spirits, simply through ignorance. We have greater facilities for locomotion than you on earth, but there are numbers of spirits who are too ignorant to avail themselves of these advantages.

Having explained to you that you possess a spiritual body, you can easily understand that, in controlling you to write, we can take hold of the spiritual counterpart of your hand and move it about. This does not prove how we move your material hand. Quite so; but it shows that if the tie between the two is strong enough, and we can also impress your brain with the ideas we want to write, we can induce your hand to trace out the words on paper which are to express our ideas. This we do by magnetism, for you could not write for us had you not previously been magnetised also.

You present to us the appearance of a deaf, dumb,

and blind man, because, though we may address you you cannot hear us, neither can you see or talk to us. You can speak to us if you like to do so, but, of course, you cannot be aware of our presence; hence, virtually, you are dumb also. When you are passive we can, however, talk to you and our words enter your brain slowly as thoughts, and you assume they are your own.

This deaf and blind man is influenced by spirits in many of his actions in life, and will be all the better when he is able to appreciate this fact. You do not quite understand how the spirit and body work together. The body is like a machine, which the spirit keeps in order and controls. The spirit sees and feels through the body, and is under the delusion that there is no existence excepting that of the body; in fact, the body ignores the spirit altogether, much to the astonishment of spirits who happen to overhear the conversation that sometimes takes place between people in the flesh when discussing these subjects with one another. We can hear all that the spirit gives utterance to through the body, and a good deal that it does *not* utter through the body, for the spirits hear as words spoken all that the embodied spirits give only *silent* utterance to, and if the spirits are on the same plane they can read your thoughts also. Yes, you may well say, "How very disagreeable!" The thoughts and muttered speeches of people in the flesh, even of the best men and women, are not subjects that their spirit friends care to listen to, and therefore one reason why we object to be much in the company of people in the body is that we are

unable to pick our company as we can in the spirit world. It is often very unpleasant to have to listen to the remarks that friends and relatives and strangers make about one another, and the vile, wicked things men think about; in fact, it is quite refreshing to meet a pure-minded man. We know, however, that even pure-minded men cannot always help evil thoughts coming into their heads, but they should trample on them and then they would be less likely to occur again.

You are puzzled to understand, if all you have heard of the spirit world be true, how a spirit could have a desire to be in the company of a person in the flesh, instead of remaining in the delightful scenery and society of the spirit world. The reason is simply because we love to do good; and to be eternally enjoying himself would very soon pall upon the taste of any man worthy of the blessings which an all-loving Father has showered so lavishly on the inhabitants of the Summer-land, as we denominate the higher spiritual spheres. We like to come back to earth to witness the sorrows and trials of our fellow-men in their struggle through life. We find that we can help them to become better, and if they could only realise what goes on behind the scenes, instead of ignoring the existence of any other beings but themselves, mankind would be much happier, because they would learn from our experience how vain are most of the pursuits upon which they lay so much stress. We may also have relations here whom we love and want to benefit, or we may simply come out of love

to mankind, like the Great Teacher who brought Christianity into the world ; at any rate, we come to benefit somebody. When we say *we*, we mean those who are on the same plane as ourselves, not the lower spirits.

Of course there are others who are here for no good motive. They want to amuse themselves at the expense of others. We are not wishing to create a prejudice against other mediums, but it is a fact that there is a vast number of spirits who are trying to bring discredit on Spiritualism by false communications and trickery, and it will be well for all investigators to make sure that the spirits they get communications from are reliable, before they attach any importance to the advice they receive. We have known some cases where even men of intellect have been brought to the verge of madness through false messages from spirits of this kind. You wish to know how people are to discover truth from falsehood. The best advice we can give them is to trust to their own common sense, and not believe all that they get from the spirit world.

If you could see all that goes on behind the scenes, you would understand how necessary this advice is. Imagine a number of people sitting round a table, waiting for a spirit message, and imagine a number of so-called spirits, who, however, are simply the fathers or mothers, sisters or brothers of these people, all standing round behind them, looking on, and trying to send messages—it may be of love—to this assemblage of what we call deaf, dumb, and blind people. The

sitters see one another, it is true, and talk away amongst themselves, but they coolly ignore the existence of the beings behind their chairs, thinking them in heaven or in hell as the case may be. Here you have a picture of the usual scene that we can witness any day in a *séance* room. We have only pictured a circle of believers or earnest inquirers. What takes place at an assemblage of frivolous-minded people may be more easily imagined than described. With such people each thinks it is the right thing to affect a tone of levity and derision. They are open to be convinced perhaps, but the proof must be furnished by the spirits who are supposed to be about. Accordingly, if anything remarkable happens, they are astonished ; and should they really get a *bond fide* communication, they are very much impressed, and either believe it is the work of the devil or of an angel. They accordingly put questions to the said spirit, and if they get intelligible responses they are the more amazed, and begin to think there is "something in this Spiritualism after all." By-and-by they attend other *séances*, and may finally become convinced, and then they become full-fledged Spiritualists.

When this stage has been reached, they are more or less prepared to believe anything that is told to them by spirits. At first they thought it was the work of the devil, but now they think it is the work of an angel, because they have received a message from some relation, and of course they are loth to believe that any relative of theirs could have anything to do with the devil. They therefore jump to the

conclusion that all they get is infallible, and are easily deceived by strangers from the spirit world, who wish to impose upon their credulity for their own amusement. Such persons run away with the impression that the messages must either come from devils or angels. They think that because they are not diabolical therefore they must be angelic, and infallible, and worthy of being listened to with reverence and attention; consequently they sit open-mouthed round the table, and take in all that the spiritual persons standing behind their backs may tell them. Those persons being only distinguishable from themselves by being in our eyes a little less shadowy than the individuals who are holding the *séance*, and deluding themselves the while into believing that, because they with their material senses cannot discern the presence of other beings, none such can exist. We say that the persons holding the *séance* are only a little less substantial to us than those who are standing at their backs, but, in point of fact, we are alluding to their material bodies, for, as already stated, *we* regard the spiritual counterpart of the human body as the *real* man. Of course we do not mean to say that the physical body is of no importance. We think it is of very great importance indeed, as, through it, the spiritual body is built up. The spirit body is dependent on the natural body whilst they are connected, but if that connection is severed before the spirit body is fully developed, the latter has to be built up by the spiritual atmosphere which it absorbs in the spirit world. This mode of taking in food is perhaps not quite intelli-

gible to you, as you are accustomed to think of the organs and senses of the physical body as being necessary for the sustenance of the body, but we will recur to this later on.

The persons at the *séance* we have been describing are all intersphered, so to speak, with spirit bodies which are exact counterparts of their earthly bodies; but the two bodies—though usually so intimately joined together as to be to all appearance *one* body—may, and frequently do, become separated for long or short intervals of time, as we shall show by-and-by.

We have said that the spirit body is an exact counterpart of the material body, and this is also true of the clothing; so that when a man dies he retains a spiritual counterpart of his clothing, because it is saturated with his magnetism, and will most readily adapt itself to his new needs. You do not understand why the spirit requires clothing at all; but it is as much required in the spirit world, whether for purposes of decency or warmth, as it is on earth. We speak now of the spirits that inhabit the earth plane. The material clothes that the body possessed may be destroyed or given away after the owner's death, but that makes no difference to their spiritual counterpart, which the spirit retains. You cannot understand how the spiritual counterpart of the clothing can be separated from the material counterpart and yet exist as a separate entity; but the fact is, that the spiritual counterpart is formed by the same process that the material garment went through, and they are from the first *two separate things*, the one as distinct

from the other as the spirit body is distinct from the natural body; and when the connection between the two is severed by any means, the two things can exist separately for the future. You wish to know how it is that the spiritual counterpart of a material object follows the movements of the latter, and is transported or changed in its nature as often as the latter? We answer that there is a connection between the two, analogous to the connection between the human spirit and the human body, and you cannot move one without moving the other, unless you sever it; but if so, you do not (as in the case of the human body) cause any decay or injury to the material counterpart, simply because the spiritual object is *inanimate* matter, and is not therefore liable to perish by severance from the material object to which it is attached. The spiritual counterpart can be as readily destroyed as the material object.

Thus, you see, there are two worlds interblended—the natural and the spiritual—and the one is an exact counterpart of the other. You are quite right in supposing that in your cities there must therefore be spiritual houses, and spiritual vehicles running about your streets, drawn by spiritual horses running on a spiritual pavement. This seems so absurd that you think we are joking, but we assure you it is perfectly true, for if there is a spiritual counterpart to the chair you are sitting upon (as we told you before) why should there not be the same of a cab, a horse, or a stone? You do not see how there can be a spirit horse, unless the horse has an immortal

soul; but you must understand that we do not say these are living spiritual counterparts of dead horses, but only of the *living* horses. When the animal dies the spiritual counterpart of its body is merely so much spiritual matter, and becomes in time decomposed, just as the material carcase does; but the spiritual counterpart of an inanimate object, such as a stone or piece of wood, does not decompose any sooner than the material object does. In course of time the spiritual counterpart will decay or pass into other forms, just the same as the material counterpart does, and then if another material substitute be employed, the spiritual counterpart of the latter replaces the old one. You think that the spiritual counterpart of any object will always remain where the material object is placed; but this is a mistake; the spiritual counterpart may be severed from the material and disposed of by spirits, who can have the benefit in this way of all your labours free of charge; and if, therefore, they take a fancy to anything they take it. Might is right in the spirit world—at least, on the earth plane; and if two spirits want the same thing, the one with the strongest will takes it; but there is so much loose property available that no one values it or desires to possess it, because every one's desires can be satisfied. When we say loose property, we mean property which has been severed from the material counterpart either by fire or by spirit power. You think it may be true that the spirit counterpart of an object can exist after the material is destroyed by fire, but you cannot understand how the two can be merely

severed without one being injured. This is true, nevertheless, and you cannot from the material side distinguish objects which have their spirit counterparts still attached from those which are not so situated. You naturally suppose that there must be some law which requires them to be connected, just as you find in the case of the human body, and that the severance would interfere with this law and produce a tangible difference. This is true; but we cannot explain the law, nor why there is no such difference visible to your senses. An instance of the severance of the material from the spiritual counterpart, and the continued existence of the former, occurs in the case of every person dying, who, by his will-power, retains the spirit counterpart of his clothes, as before explained. Here the severance is unconsciously effected by the spirit.

The existence of this spiritual counterpart of earthly objects seems to you an extraordinary state of things, and you cannot take it all in yet, but when you consider it fully you will see that it is only reasonable. Your towns are full of men and women who have parted with their material bodies, and still live on in the old way, scarcely knowing whether they are alive or dead, for they see everything going on as before: they jostle against their friends in the streets, and they see no difference in them excepting that those who are still in the body seem—as we told you before—like deaf, dumb, and blind people, who pass them by, and take no notice of them. Of course, all who pass away from your world do not lead this kind of

life, or there would not be room in your towns to hold the millions who would in course of time become crowded together. As it is, these unfortunate beings are sadly too numerous. It is a painful sight to see the wretches who crowd together in their old haunts in your cities and in the country too ; for generations of people will sometimes live on and on in the same house, never thinking of the possibility of there being any higher life, but simply *vegetating*, as, in fact, thousands do amongst you now.

We will now describe what takes place at the funeral of one of these individuals who thinks there are no other beings in the world than he can see with his own eyes. His spirit body rises from the natural body, as has been described by Andrew Jackson Davis* and other clairvoyants, and the person who a moment before thought he was dying finds himself suddenly quite well again, and sees himself clothed in his usual garments. These he has got so accustomed to that he cannot dispense with them. You say that this does not account for his having them on if he was recently lying in bed without them. True ; but the spirit would unconsciously resume his clothes on awakening in the new world by merely exercising his will-power—his thoughts, however, being too much occupied with his own condition to think much about such trifles as dress. The latter, from old habit, would spontaneously be resumed. We may as well observe here that the spirit does not require to sleep at all,

* Vide *The Magic Staff*, by A. J. Davis. London : James Burns, 15 Southampton Row.

it is only the *body* that sleeps. Whilst the body sleeps the spirit either remains near the body, and talks to spirit friends who may be near, or it takes a journey to a distance. The spirit is often more lively when the body is asleep, because it has nothing to think about; consequently, when the body is *asleep* the spirit is *awake*, and can talk and amuse itself. You are amused at the idea of the spirit enjoying itself whilst the body is asleep, but this is true nevertheless; and we know cases where the spirit is much more interesting to his friends when the body sleeps than when he is compelled to manifest himself through the flesh.

We said in our first paper that the spirit—not being conscious of our presence whilst it is attached to the body—has the appearance of a deaf and blind man. We should have said that it has the appearance of a man who is in a state of somnambulism. The spirit in the flesh can talk and hear, but he cannot see, and what he says has no reference to the disembodied spirits around him. In fact you, the so-called “embodied spirits,” confine your remarks to yourselves, and ignore the existence of all other beings. Hence, when we talk to you, you take no notice unless we shout in your ears, and then you give a faint sign of recognition or comprehension, but take no further notice of us, being absorbed in your own thoughts and duties, and paying no attention to the remarks or actions of the spirits about you, who do not happen to be attached to material bodies. You are blind, because you cannot see us; you are deaf, because you cannot hear us speak; and you are dumb, because you

cannot speak to us. This is why we may style you deaf, dumb, and blind to all that goes on in the spirit world. When one of you gets into such a state or place that he *can* see a spirit, he forthwith says he has seen a "ghost," and his friends tell him he is a fool ; so that, seeing how universally his supposed vision is discredited, he finally thinks they must be right, and says no more about it. If, however, he persists, they incarcerate him as a lunatic.

It will be as well here to define what we mean by material and spiritual bodies, and what we understand by soul and spirit. The material body is what you call the physical body. The spiritual body is what we call the spiritual counterpart of the former, visible only to us, and appearing to our senses to be material and solid, whilst your physical body seems ghostly and transparent. What we call the "soul" is not the spirit body nor the material body, but is the life essence that dwells in the spirit body, and of which the latter, as well as the material body, are only the outer envelopes. When we speak of "the spirit" (as an inhabitant of the spirit world), of course we mean the soul and its spirit body. You are, however, just as much "spirits" as we are, only that you possess, in addition to the soul and its spirit body, a material body also. We prefer, when necessary, to distinguish you from us by the title of "embodied spirits," or "spirits in the flesh," as against our cognomen, "disembodied spirits." We trust this definition of terms will render more clear to your mind what follows.

Although, as stated before, the spirit body is not

conscious, during the time that the material body is awake, of anything that goes on around it in the spirit world; yet, when the latter is asleep, the spirit once more resumes consciousness, but cannot afterwards convey any recollection of it to the body; consequently, that part of a man's life which is enacted during the time of the body's repose is a complete blank to the embodied spirit. There is nothing to prevent your spirit from having a circle of friends in the spirit world, with whom you can associate when your body sleeps. In fact, it is commonly the case that the friends or guides who are in attendance on the body during the day let the spirit enjoy their society at night. The spirit is not able to leave the body whilst it sleeps, but stays in its immediate vicinity, and is ready to rejoin it at a moment's notice should any necessity arise. Hence it is very difficult for any one to approach a sleeping person without wakening the sleeper. The spirit sees all that is going on, and will waken the body if necessary. You think you have heard of cases where men have been murdered in their sleep, which seems to contradict our statements. This is quite true, and in such cases the spirit would either not be awake, or would not be able to awaken the body, for there are times when the spirit is overcome too by the necessity for repose. This might be caused by a torpor, brought on by over-eating or drinking or sedatives, by extraordinary brain labour, or even by bodily labour. When the body sleeps the spirit may walk about the room and talk with friends, but cannot

usually leave the room, excepting on rare occasions. It is attended with some danger for the spirit to go far away, as the connecting link might be severed between the spirit and the body, when the death of the body would ensue.

You ask whether the spirit might not wish to sever this link, and whether he has the power to do it where life in the body is no longer enjoyable? We answer No; because it is not the *spirit* that is tired of life, it is only the *body* that suffers. It is true you talk of the "happy release" of the spirit from the troubles of the bodily life, but this is merely a figure of speech which has no foundation in fact, since the spirit does not suffer like the body; and it knows, moreover, that its sufferings when so released from the body would be greater than any *it* will suffer whilst attached to the latter. The body saves the spirit from suffering that which, at death, will fall on the latter instead of on the former. We allude to the ordinary troubles and trials of life. Of course, in case of disease of the body, there is a similar affection of the spirit which has to be borne by the latter, and cannot be shirked by transferring the suffering from the spirit to the body. When a spirit really longs to be free from the body it undoubtedly has the power, by exercise of its will, to bring it about; and if we were to advise your spirit to long to be rid of the body, and he were to agree to do so, it would be brought about. So also if another spirit longs for the severance from its body of a friend who is still on earth, this longing has a tendency to

produce the death of that person by severing the tie ; and if any evil spirit, for purposes of revenge or otherwise, were to will that anyone on earth should die, and such a person were not protected by his spirit friends, whose wills were more powerful than those of his enemy, the death of such a person would be expedited. Bad men are not, however, in the habit of acting without a motive, and there is no inducement for people out of the body to wish for the death of those on earth, because the former would gain nothing by it. Of course there are plenty of persons in the spirit world who hate others in the flesh, and would only be too glad to do them an injury, either by terminating their lives or producing illness or accidents, and in many cases such results do follow, where the person in question has no spirit friends to protect him.

Imagine, for example, the case of a thoroughly bad man, who has spent his life in injuring others. When the latter go to the spirit world they may, perhaps, desire to revenge themselves on the author of their sufferings, and they will congregate around him, and seek every opportunity to do him an injury, and, unless he is well protected, he will be sure to suffer some penalty for his misdeeds, which is, of course, looked upon by you as a punishment by "Providence." In a sense it is quite true that God *permits* such revenge to be indulged in, but at the same time, for the spirit, it is only like trying "to injure his nose in order to spite his face," since the act of revenge is nearly as great a wrong as that which it is intended

to punish. There are many bad men in your world who are used by the spirit world to do good in some particular direction, and they may be protected from injury in order that those ends may be accomplished; as, for instance, the late Emperor Napoleon, who was a bad man from a spiritual point of view, but who was of use to the spirit world in various ways. He was ill advised, and at last his spirit friends could protect him no longer, as his enemies became more powerful than his friends.

Spirits themselves are influenced by other and higher spirits, and it is a mistake to suppose that the "spirit world" is an immaculate body which only influences the destinies of nations for good. Such a number of spirits as congregated round the late Emperor, and aided and abetted him, were not better than himself, and they were obliged to give way to the influence of higher spirits, who espoused the cause of the other side. A bad man, as we have said, may be influenced by spirits, and so may a good man, unless he is protected by spirit friends. Let us explain: We do not mean to say that the spirits have the power to injure the spirit body, much less the physical body, for the latter is not tangible to spirits. The spirit body is so, but still they cannot hurt it without first making it *conscious*; and whilst the body is awake the spirit is asleep, or nearly so, and cannot be injured; for matter, with us, is not like matter with you.

The matter of which the spirit body is composed is not the same kind of matter from our point of view that your matter is from your point of view; its pro-

perties are vastly different. For instance, if you compress matter in the spirit world, it will expand again like india-rubber; and if two spirits come in contact they do not produce a concussion, but they yield to one another. Men who would injure one another in the spirit world are thus unable to do so, because they cannot disturb the substance of which their bodies are composed; thus you see that if two spirits—say one in the body and one out of the body—met one another in the street, the bodies of both of them need not be subject to the same consequences that would ensue on earth. Of course, the spirit unattached to a body (being *conscious*) would rather avoid the embodied spirit than come in contact, because he has become accustomed to do so, just the same as your habit of avoiding one another when meeting in the street causes people with you to get out of each other's way. You see therefore that it is the business of the spirit to keep out of the way of the embodied spirit, for the latter is unconscious of any one being in his way, and cannot avoid the other; and being, moreover, unconscious of pain, he has nothing to lose by the collision. Hence the other gives him as wide a berth as you would to a blind man. Of course, in view of these facts, the presence of such a number of blind men in crowded thoroughfares, like those you find in your large cities, must cause some amount of inconvenience to the spirit denizens of your towns, since they cannot move about freely; but if they prefer to remain in the earth plane, they must put up with the consequent disadvantages. They live in

your houses, walk in your streets, frequent your places of amusement, and take part in all that goes on, if so disposed. They need not pay for anything, and can help themselves to all they like.

You think that if spirits can help themselves to everything, and if you have spiritual garments on your back whilst you are walking the streets in an unconscious state, spirits might rob you of your clothes ; but this is a mistake, because the spirit counterpart of your clothes would be of no use to spirits in our world. They might, it is true, do such a thing, and you wish to know what would ensue if it were done. Well, it would be a loss to the embodied spirit, of which he would become conscious on resuming consciousness in the spirit world. He would then simply use his will-power to compel the restoration of his own, and if his will-power were not strong enough he would be obliged to rest content without the spiritual counterpart to his earthly garments.

You imagine that the spiritual counterpart of the clothes you wear is capable of being severed from the material counterpart at will by any spirit who fancies your property, but the fact is that the two cannot be severed without some effort of will-power such as all spirits do not possess ; consequently, it would be much more difficult than you suppose for a spirit to rob you of your spiritual garments, or the spirit counterpart of your watch and jewellery, for instance. We cannot explain the subject more clearly to you, because the laws which appertain to our world are so different from yours, and your illustrations are, from

our point of view, too improbable, and therefore not worth pursuing.

Clothes, with us, are not worn to protect a physical body from cold or heat, but as a symbol of the spiritual condition of the wearer. Thus, clothes in the spirit world serve the double capacity of clothing the spirit body and indicating the spiritual state of the person wearing them. To a person who is on the same spiritual level, the clothes appear just as fresh and gay as they do to you, because he sees the actual counterpart of the velvets and silks of the person in the flesh; but to a person in our world who is advanced *beyond* the condition of the one in question, the latter's clothes merely show that he is in a certain spiritual condition. The original garments may be costly and rich, but the wearer, if impoverished in spirit, will only strike the observer as being enveloped in rags, and not beautifully attired as *you* see him. This double vision is not intelligible to you, and we cannot very well explain it; but in order that our communications may not be inconsistent we think it better to give the best analogy we can present to you. We said that to a person on the same spiritual level the spiritual counterpart of the clothes will assume their actual character, and you think that a king's garments might therefore be an object of envy to a beggar. Quite so, and no doubt they are, but not for long; because they soon cease to value what every one can possess who wants such finery, of which there are plenty of articles available. With us, of course, they are not valued, nor with the denizens of

the earth plane, for even they do not care to wear finery where no one values it. The king may cling to his old ways, and be glad to retain his robes; but the peasant, if on the same level and no more advanced, will simply retain his old ways of living too, and will not envy the king his. Both of them will be equally ragged in the eyes of the spiritually advanced. No man, therefore, can or would put on the garments of his neighbour, either actual or visionary, because the former would not fit him, and the latter would not suit his condition—because they are the thoughts of another man, and people prefer their own clothes just as they also prefer their own thoughts. Thus, a man can no more put on the garments of another in the spirit world than you can put on the mental clothing of your friends. Others are satisfied with *their* dress, and you with yours. From the higher spiritual standpoint your thoughts are your clothing, and no man can or would take on your thoughts; because they are your peculiar property, and would not suit anyone else. In other words, you cannot get rid of your clothes excepting by changing the current of your thoughts, and wishing to become better; for that is the only way in which you can have any desire to possess another person's clothes in the spirit world. This is the best analogy we can present to you between clothes with you, and clothes with us. You would naturally not desire to change your thoughts unless you hoped to gain by the change; and seeing that, as we have shown, all persons think they are right, *i. e.*, that their

thoughts are right, of course they have no desire to put on the thoughts, or spiritual clothing, of another.

We see the spiritual counterpart of your garments saturated with the magnetism of your thoughts, and that alters their spiritual appearance, so that they cannot long remain just as they were when first put on; in fact, they become absolutely changed into something altogether different by reason of the magnetism of the wearer, for this magnetism is in the nature of *matter*, and is radiated by every one in the flesh in a sphere around his body, and which is always characteristic of the individual's spiritual state; and in this way the spirit's clothes come to represent his character and thoughts. You see, therefore, that there may be many personal spheres of this kind in one family, which may all differ from one another, and yet these persons are often compelled to live together and amalgamate as well as they can, the more sensitive ones being crushed by the magnetism of the more vigorous. This magnetism, being in the nature of matter, permeates the rooms where you live, as the sphere of one person impinges upon that of another; its influence is often felt by the latter, and those who are sufficiently sensitive frequently perceive such an influence the moment a stranger enters a room. Since all minds do not agree in thought, so also the magnetism which different bodies throw off does not always blend equally well. Some persons have a magnetism that is particularly inharmonious to others, and both persons feel uncomfortable in the other's presence, and if compelled to remain there, the

weaker, or least positive of the two, must suffer in health of body and mind. When this is the case, such people should separate. It does not matter whether they be husband and wife, or brother and sister, the laws of nature require to be obeyed. The magnetism which each person engenders is not necessarily created by the body alone, but the spirit is answerable for the thoughts with which it is permeated; and if those thoughts are evil, the person who is affected by the magnetism is influenced for evil instead of for good, which latter would be the case if the thoughts were benevolent.

The thoughts of the mind tinge the magnetism which the body throws out, and these thoughts affect other persons who may be in the sphere of the thinker, and may do good or harm to such persons according to the manner in which they harmonise with the latter's thoughts, or the reverse. Thus you see how advisable it is to keep your thoughts pure—and the same obligation lies upon us also—in order that you may not be the means of doing injury to others. On the other hand, it is equally true that a man may unconsciously do a considerable amount of good in the world by simply living a good life, and thus influencing others, not so much by his example as by his personal magnetic sphere, which is beneficial to ^{the} morally diseased with whom he comes in contact. The power of benefiting others in this way is undoubtedly counteracted by the baneful influence which emanates from other magnetic spheres, but it is none the less a reality. An equal amount of good may be

done by a man who leads a pure life in the midst of the impure, as by one who gives thousands away in charity. The one gives spiritual benefits, and the other bestows temporal advantages. We know many men who live pure lives, and mix with their fellow-men quietly and unostentatiously, and who are doing good to the latter in many ways that they do not see or appreciate at present, but which, by and by, will be made clear to them. They do not merely confer benefits by their example, but also by their personal magnetic sphere, and its healthy influence upon others. The good is not confined even to the healthy influence of their own presence, but is likewise enhanced by the healthy influence of the spirit friends they bring with them; for we on our side benefit other spirits in precisely the same way that you do those in the body. The good man and his friends form a stronghold of purity, from which radiate influences that tell upon the spirit friends of your bad men; for these same spirit friends are much more aware of the presence and effect of such a power for good than are the men with whom they are associated. As before explained, the *thoughts* of the good man (being also fed by the impressions of his spirit guides) are like words spoken aloud to the spirit friends of the bad one; and when the pure-minded man in thought condemns or reproaches the ^{other}—though he may never utter a syllable aloud—he may rouse feelings of shame in the breasts of the evil-^{er}'s spirit friends, which will re-act upon their companion in the flesh, and make him feel uncomfortable in the former's presence. You may, perhaps,

have heard tell of the sort of uncomfortable feeling that a bad man has when he finds himself in the presence of a man or woman whom he instinctively feels to be better and purer than himself. The *thoughts* of the pure-minded man have a similar effect on the spirit friends of the misguided man to what would have been produced by giving them good advice, and it not unfrequently ends in their feeling ashamed of their associate in the flesh, and abandoning him as a companion, thereby benefiting themselves and him too, since the proverb about "evil companions corrupting good manners," is no less true in our world than in yours.

Apropos of this subject, we think that on earth you sometimes keep your thoughts too much to yourselves, and if you see a bad man who repels you, you are frequently as civil to him as you would be to a good man, simply from a mistaken notion of politeness, or kindness. Such a man, consequently, does not feel that he has done anything wrong, and he will never begin to reform until he gets into the next world, when he finds that people have not the power to think in one way and speak in another. Every thought of the mind tinges the magnetism of the thinker, consequently if people in the spirit world think evil of a man, he sees it at once, and is hurt by it, and that gives him pain, and is the punishment which he brings on himself. The bad man, consequently, flees from the thoughts of such persons, because he cannot endure their society until he has earned more kindly feelings by making compensation to those he has

wronged, and repenting of his former sins, thus changing the opinion which others entertain of him from aversion to esteem.

We were saying that the spirit body is composed of so-called spirit matter, which is unlike your matter, by reason of its being more pliable and yielding, and capable of being compressed into a small space without affecting the spirit who inhabits this body ; for, as before explained, the spirit body is not the spirit. The latter, which may more properly be termed the soul, merely dwells in the spirit body ; but the spirit body will retain its form throughout all eternity, not exactly as you see it, but as it may, in the future, be changed by developing into greater perfection, until, ultimately, every man's body becomes perfect. Let this prove to you the importance of being well born into the world, for if you have not a well-formed mind the spirit body cannot develop itself, let the physical body be as well proportioned as it may ; for, as we have already told you, the spirit body is dependent on the mind for its food, whilst the mind, through the brain, is dependent on the physical body for its growth. Unless, therefore, the physical body is well cared for, the brain—which is the organ of the mind—suffers and becomes impaired, consequently the mind cannot be developed, and if that be the case the growth of the spirit body is also impaired. According to this theory, you argue that a lunatic or an idiot, with a fully developed physical body, can scarcely have any spiritual body at all, and therefore the law of spiritual counterparts to all material bodies

does not apply. You are mistaken, however, for although the law does not apply in the sense in which you understand it, it does so in the sense in which *we* understand it. Just as we pointed out that a richly clothed man appeared to spirits as a pauper in rags, if his spiritual wants had been neglected, so also a person whose mind has been starved *appears* to us like a wretched, undersized being, dwarfed in his spirit body, though to himself he doubtless seems to be a full grown man. It is entirely a question of spiritual growth, not of material growth, that we allude to. If you reflect that the comparison between the spirit body and the material body involves the assumption that the conditions of matter in both worlds are the same, you will easily see that any attempt to explain what appears to you to be inconsistent is almost impossible. The two things are subject to totally different laws, and cannot therefore be compared, since you cannot comprehend how the spirit body and the material body can at the same time be counterparts from a material point of view, and yet be totally different from a spiritual standpoint. In short, there are many things in the spirit world which you on earth cannot possibly comprehend, because you have no experience to guide you in your comparison of things spiritual with things earthly. Your experience has been hitherto limited to one side of life only, namely, the physical.

When a man dies he has to learn everything anew. He is like a child in regard to many things that we are acquainted with, and has to be instructed in the

most ordinary subjects. For instance, he learns an entirely new means of locomotion; he finds that he requires no food, and cannot understand how he is to live or what he is to do. He may want to go to bed, but he finds that he is never tired, and it is never dark,—there being no day or night in the spirit world—which, of course, puzzles him exceedingly. Again, he wonders where his friends are, for he very often does not realise that he is dead at all. In the sense in which he has been led to expect he would be dead, of course he is not so, but still he has been translated to another life—a change which requires to be explained to him. His duties also he finds vastly different. On earth he had to toil and struggle for his daily existence; now he has to learn wisdom and love—which latter is a quality the majority of those who come from your world are sadly deficient in. Their characters are often developed almost entirely in this direction *after* their entrance into spirit life, where they perhaps find themselves (if such be their merit) surrounded by kind and loving friends, whose chief pleasure is to make them happy. We speak here chiefly of those who have qualified themselves for the “Summer-land,” as we call the first of the spirit spheres *above* the earth plane.

Thus, you see, the two lives are so totally different that it is impossible to make you understand things that we comprehend, and have daily and hourly experience of; as, for instance, the fact of spirit communion between persons whose spirit bodies are millions of miles apart, and the fact that we can be instantaneously with those distant friends,

and yet return again to your side without your having noticed our absence.

When, however, we move about on the earth plane—which, we think, ought to be the first subject of study for spiritualists, instead of so often dreaming about the beauties of the Summer-land—we are obliged to subject ourselves, to some extent, to the laws that appertain to the earth plane. We do not require, however, to move about on foot. Will-power does everything with us ; and being from higher spheres than the earth plane, we enjoy higher privileges ; thus we can transport ourselves even on the earth plane by will-power if we like, though the most usual mode of locomotion for spirits on the earth plane is similar to your own, namely, on foot. They can, however, also avail themselves of your facilities in the shape of steam and horse conveyances. In our own spheres higher and more perfect laws appertain ; but in approaching your earth we become more human in our capacities, and have, when introducing ourselves to your notice, to accommodate ourselves to our listeners, and become as one of yourselves again, dropping for the time being a good deal of the experience which we have gained since leaving your world.

No one who has not passed through the change called death can understand the feelings of surprise and delight with which persons from the earth enter into the spirit world, and see themselves surrounded by old faces, remembered long ago, and seemingly in a former state of existence ; for the change they have just passed through has placed a barrier between

themselves and all their recent associations and surroundings, such as makes their new life almost a new birth. Some think they are awakening out of a long sleep of years, and that they will find themselves children again, their intermediate life being merely a dream. This feeling is owing to the extreme vividness of their childish recollections, which are first to return to their remembrance. Thus they imagine, at first glance, that all their recent cares and troubles in life are passing away, and all remembrance thereof is being wiped out : but this is an illusion which a very short experience in the spirit world suffices to dispel. Memory, they soon learn, will not be thrown off, but clings to them still ; and as the earlier pages of their life's career pass before the mind's eye, they give place once more to the more recent events they would fain have erased from recollection, but which nevertheless assert their right to be again remembered.

The fact that they are in another world of being does not immediately strike the newcomers ; for they see at first no difference in their surroundings. There is the same bed on which they had but recently lain down to die ; and now that the dreaded event has actually happened, they find themselves standing by the side of a transparent duplicate of their former selves—for the material body, (minus its spiritual counterpart) presents to *us* the appearance of a ghostly corpse, of which the spirit body now severed from it is the real *material* counterpart. The earthly friends of the dead man stand around this ghostly

image of himself—lying stiff and stark on the bed before them—weeping and wringing their hands, with cries of anguish or despair. How should the newly-arisen spirit realise the immense change that has taken place in his state? He speaks to his friends, but the latter take no notice of him, persisting in lavishing the most extravagant lamentations over the wretched object before them. No one who has not attended a scene of the kind we are describing can realise the intense anguish of the spirit on finding his friends so inconsolable, and knowing that he cannot render them any help, for the consolation he would now give them it is impossible for him to convey, since he speaks to those who cannot hear him, and appeals to those who see him not. Until, therefore, the state of the case is fully explained to him, it is easily conceivable that he fails to realise the change that he has undergone. Could he have foreseen it, he would probably have given thousands of pounds to have spared his friends the anguish they are suffering on his account, and which, of course, is rendered all the more acute to him, because he cannot show them how mistaken they are in bemoaning his death, and how groundless their sorrow is. He is not dead; he liveth. Such are the words he would impress on their sorrowful hearts if he had but the power, but his tongue is speechless to their ears, and his form is no longer living in their eyes; so what can he do but lament with them. This only increases their sorrow, as his mind, being in sympathy with theirs, renders him susceptible to the same feelings that they experience;

and thus one re-acts on the other, and the result is an increase of grief to all.

If the friends who are left behind could but see the joyous, gladsome spirit who first rises from the recumbent form of the dead man—for, until he realises his surroundings, his spirit is filled with joy and thankfulness to the Almighty for having, as he supposes, raised him from a bed of sickness and sorrow to a renewed lease of life—they would not be sad, but rejoice at the change which, though depriving them of the companionship of one they loved, has been for him a consummation devoutly to be wished. On first rising, his sensations, in fact, are somewhat similar to those of a man rising from a sweet, refreshing sleep. When, however, he begins to realise the true state of the case, it is easy to imagine how bitterly he will regret the neglect of any means of information that would have removed the dreadful blank in the lives of the dear ones he has left behind—mourning over an “absent one,” who all the time is in their midst. How happy might they not all be if they had bestowed a little attention on the phenomena of Spiritualism, and developed some power of communicating between the two worlds.

Such a scene must strike everyone as a commentary on the uselessness of modern religious teaching, that requires no words of ours to emphasise. Here we have, perhaps, a clergyman of the Church of England, surrounded by his wife and children, all bemoaning the loss they have sustained in the “removal from their midst” of their late teacher and parent, whose

special vocation it was to enlighten the minds of his fellow-men and women on the future life, and they are left in such absolute ignorance of it that they do not even know the first foundation of their faith, namely, the immortality of the soul. The guide and friend whom they have so recently lost stands in their midst, and they do not even know it; and what is more—for unless their spiritual eyesight be opened they cannot be aware of the fact—they do not even believe it. Had they followed the advice of St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Corinthians, and sought after “spiritual gifts,” one of which is “the discerning of spirits,” they would have been happier men and women, and more consistent professors of the faith they belong to. Their late pastor and father taught his congregation to believe that he and others would be carried away at death “to sleep in the bosom of Jesus” until the final resurrection of the dead, and here he stands in their midst, whilst they are reaping the bitter fruits of the false teaching he has instilled into their minds. Had they been sufficiently enlightened upon the subject of their church’s teaching, they would have known also that, with St. Paul, “there is a natural body and a spiritual body,” and that it is the former that dies, but not the latter. They would have remembered that, as St. Paul says, “corruption cannot inherit incorruption,” and therefore the body lying dead before them cannot be the same body the spirit now possesses, but that this latter can only be the “spiritual body” St. Paul alludes to.

Had they believed all these things, they would

have held fast to their belief in the hour of trial and sorrow, and it would have been a ray of light that would have comforted them infinitely more than the doubt and uncertainty of the church's teachings. The husband and father they loved so well is not dead, they would have said. He does not inhabit the worn-out diseased body we see before us; he has assumed the spiritual body which the Bible speaks of, and we are happy in believing that which we are told in the "Word of God," because it explains away all mystery, and gives us a rational explanation of the change our friend has undergone.

This is a scene we often witness at the death-beds of those on your side of the grave. Such persons should try to act more as if they believed in the teachings of their church, before treating contemptuously the "deluded spiritualists," whose only crime is that they know for a fact the truth of the doctrine taught by these reverend pastors and masters concerning the soul's immortality, and who live up to that belief, and do not merely confess it with their lips, and deny it by their fears, as the orthodox too often do. They would then find in it more true consolation in the hour of trial and sorrow than in any other of the church's doctrines.

We do not wish to under-rate the efforts and labours of conscientious members of the Church of England, or any other faith; but we do say that those who teach others, and profess to have all the special means of enlightenment which are derivable from the study of

ecclesiastical and theological lore, should be the last to leave their families in doubt about a subject which, above all others, every religious man and woman should be acquainted with.

You wish to know how we distinguish your thoughts from words uttered silently, both of which, as said before, we are cognisant of when in your company. As regards thoughts not framed into words, we do not *hear* them ; we merely read them on your minds like a book. This is, of course, not intelligible to you, but that is the nearest analogy we know of. As to words spoken—whether aloud, or to yourself only—they are all alike audible to us. We do not distinguish one from the other. It is true that one produces intonation on your sense of hearing, whilst the other does not ; but, in the world of spirits, thoughts uttered silently or aloud, are all alike audible. You are right in concluding that this must cause great confusion in listening to your conversation, for, of course, we mix up words spoken for others to hear with those you intend for yourselves alone ; consequently we hear nothing but a confused Babel very often. When people are talking excitedly, they do not give themselves time to talk much to themselves between their different remarks, hence such conversation is more interesting to us. As a rule, however, it is not profitable to listen to the conversation of people in the flesh, not merely on account of the difficulty in making out what you really mean to say to one another, but because of the objectionable nature of a good deal that is *not* uttered aloud for others to hear.

You wished also to know something more about the process of transition through which the spirit passes in the change called death. When the body is dying, the spirit is in a state of insensibility ; for the process of severing the tie between the two bodies is not so simple as you would suppose. The material body is pervaded by the spiritual counterpart, the particles of which extend to all parts of the frame of the natural body, so that the spirit cannot become disconnected from it without considerable pain, unless the death be from old age, in which case it is a perfectly painless transition. In cases of sudden death it is otherwise ; and the spirit is as averse to such a death as the body is—in fact, more so ; because the pain which appertains to the body is really felt by the spirit, and the pain which the latter endures continues after the state of insensibility has supervened, and the spirit body begins to breathe in the spirit world. When a sudden death occurs with the body in good health, the pain of separation is very great ; but when there is disease it is less painful, as the spirit does not feel so much of the pain of separation where the ties have been previously loosened by disease or decay. In the case of decay, the process is a perfectly natural one, more so than the other, and in many cases there is no pain whatever. It all depends on the mode of life and state of health of the individual ; and the closer a man lives to nature, the more natural and the less free from pain will be the effort of the spirit to disengage itself from the body. We consider a natural death is not a more

painful process than that of being born—in fact, there is no more consciousness in the one case than in the other, where the conditions are equally good. The spirit, when it becomes disengaged from the body, absorbs from the latter all the particles of vitalised matter which we term animal magnetism that the body contained, and the natural body then begins to decay,—for the moment the spirit is finally disengaged from the body, the decay of the latter must commence. You think the body is not in a state of decay until you see the outward signs of it; but that is a mistake, for the internal decay has preceded the outward evidence of it, and there is no longer any need to keep the body above ground. You imagine because we said the spirit body cannot be injured, that therefore it cannot suffer pain. This is a mistake. The soul within the spirit body suffers pain when there is occasion for it; but the spiritual body does not suffer pain. When we say that the process of death is painful through the violent severing of the ties between the spirit body and the natural body, we do not mean that the ties are physical in the sense in which you would understand the expression, if we were alluding, for instance, to the connection between a man's arm and his body, in a case of amputation. The ties that bind the spirit to the body are mental ties rather than physical ties, and they do not therefore give pain to the spirit body, but to the soul dwelling within that body. In the case of the amputation of a limb of the physical body, the pain is felt in every part of the frame. Not so with the spiritual body; the pain in

the latter case is entirely mental. Hence a good man may suffer great mental distress, synonymous with your physical pain, if he come to a violent end. His condition of spiritual preparation would not prevent, any more than a consciousness of having lived rightly would relieve you from the mental distress consequent on being violently separated from all you hold dear in the world.

The question of cremation has excited a considerable amount of interest lately, and we may as well allude to it here, since it is one that spirits ought to be able to throw some light upon. The effect of fire on all matter that is associated with spirit, whether it be animate or inanimate, is to cause an immediate severance of the tie that connects the spiritual counterpart with the material; hence, in the case of human beings, if there were any difficulty in the spirit getting free from the body, it would be at once overcome, by consigning the spirit body to the flames, and as the body is in a state of insensibility, there could be no pain to the spirit from injury to the body, any more than if the body were beaten; whilst the fire would free the spirit from a tie that sometimes keeps it near the body for a considerable time. So also with regard to any inanimate matter that you may burn; it does not destroy the spiritual counterpart, but it disconnects it from the material counterpart, and gives the spiritual counterpart a separate existence.

We cannot remove the spiritual counterpart to any distance from the material counterpart without first

completely severing the tie between them by a special process which we cannot explain, but which may be made as effectual as the fire process by those who understand it. As a rule, however, the severance is by fire; for where the material counterpart is removed by you, the spiritual counterpart goes with it, as in the case of pulling down a house. It is true we told you that spirits could help themselves to loose property, and enjoy the fruits of your labour, by taking possession of the spiritual counterpart of your possessions; but you must remember that we did not say they could be *removed*. To enjoy them where they stand is one thing, to remove them is another. A slight removal can readily be effected, just the same as the spirit body may move to a short distance from the material body whilst the latter sleeps, but a longer separation requires special preparation. The complete severance of such things from their material counterpart requires the exercise of more will-power, since all force in our world, as in yours, is will-power, which, however, requires to be guided by intelligence. Hence the most intelligent agents can most readily accomplish this severance. The man recently deceased effects the separation of his garments with less difficulty, because there is a stronger tie between him and his own garments than there is between him and a strange object.

Since fire effects a complete severance of the material from the spiritual, it follows that where a house is burnt down, the spiritual counterpart of the house remains standing until it is replaced by the new one,

if such be erected. Where no new house is erected, the old one remains standing in the spirit world ; but, as you infer, these are not very common. Nevertheless, there are many evidences of the existence of former houses still visible to us, but not seen by you. They continue to be mixed up with the new building materials in a peculiar jumble, because the workmen who erect the new building substitute new materials for the old ones, but do not remove the latter, simply because they are not visible to them. Were they able to see them, of course, they would take the trouble to do so ; but in our world, there is no one to take any interest in such matters, hence things are left as we find them. You are the only builders, we simply look on. The new materials have spiritual counterparts, which displace the old ones where the two come in contact ; but where that is not the case, the new house and the old one (from our point of view) are mixed up together in a fashion that to you would seem unbusinesslike and slovenly. So, too, the materials displaced are not removed, but fall to the ground and remain there, until in course of time they get scattered by other causes. The falling building materials (spiritual counterparts) could not, as you suppose, injure any one, because persons in the flesh are unconscious and could not be hurt by them ; and those in the spirit world are able to protect themselves by their will-power. Where a house is burnt down, the spiritual particles which have emanated from the former inhabitants, and saturated the walls, become detached and fall to the ground, thus relieving the unhappy

spirits who lingered there from a tie that has, perhaps, long attracted them to the place.

However absurd all this may appear to you, the absurdity in our eyes lies in the fact, that you can doubt the existence of such spiritual matter. We have told you there is a spiritual counterpart of the human body, and, if so,—and your Bible tells you of this—there *must* be a spiritual counterpart of every form of matter. This is a logical deduction from the foregoing that any reasonable man can arrive at for himself ; for how could spirit bodies revisit your earth if they saw nothing but spiritual counterparts of human beings walking in space. It is scarcely conceivable that any one would prefer to believe the latter theory in preference to the theory—if you like to call it such—which we teach.

To revert to the spirit house. We were saying that the destruction by fire of the house removed the magnetic particles adhering to the walls, and this sets free those spirits who may be attracted by those particles—for each person in the spirit world is more or less attached to his home, and when that is destroyed he necessarily seeks another. It is true his house stands where it was, until the workmen from your side rebuild it ; but, by the removal of these magnetic emanations, the whole aspect of the place has become changed in the spirits' eyes, and they no longer feel drawn to it. One brick wall is as attractive as another, but for the fact that you have got "used to it," and so it is with the spirit inhabitants ; only, with us, the reason is more palpable than it is to you. You

think it is the force of habit ; we think it is the attraction of your magnetic emanations which have saturated the place with part of your being, and made it, in other words, part of yourselves. Hence, when the house is destroyed by fire, the spirit has no longer any tie to the old place, so he seeks another, and in so doing, he is compelled to come more in contact with his fellow-men, and he learns that there are other beings and other interests in the world besides his own,—in short, he is compelled to rouse himself, and hence it is that a great fire may be a great benefit to the spirit world, as it would relieve a number of unhappy men and women, who, in dwelling for years in one spiritual atmosphere, have been to all intents and purposes imprisoned. The removal and rebuilding of an old house may, of course, effect the same object, but not so completely as a fire does ; for the old materials are generally used up again elsewhere, and the spirit inhabitants are still attracted to them. In fact, a fire exercises a purifying and cleansing process on spirit matter which nothing else so effectually accomplishes.

Although the destruction of the material counterpart by fire leaves the spiritual counterpart intact, such separation, nevertheless, has a tendency to induce the more speedy decay of the latter. As long, however, as the material continues to exist in some form of *matter* (not gaseous), there is still a tie between the two which tends to preserve the spiritual counterpart from decay ; excepting where the special effort, before mentioned, is made to produce the complete

severance of the tie between the spiritual and the material, as effectual in its results as the fire.

You say that if fire destroys the material object, but leaves its spiritual counterpart intact, then the fire-places in your houses, and the furnaces in your works must, in the spirit world, be choked with the accumulations of coal, wood, and paper, which, for the last fifty or one hundred years, have been consumed therein, and consequently your houses would, from the spirits' point of view, be impassable by reason of the heaps of spiritual *débris* that must be left there. These remains, no doubt, form a large part of the objectionable matter which encumbers your houses and streets; but there are also many articles that spirits have severed from their material counterparts, and then abandoned, which also form no small portion of the spiritual *débris* we spoke of. You must remember, however, that your servants—in removing the ashes and other remains from your fire-places, and substituting fresh materials for consumption—cannot help, unconsciously, disturbing and removing spiritual *débris* also, which thus get scattered and removed from sight. In fact, it is not so much in your houses as in your streets that the accumulations of spiritual rubbish we speak of are to be found, for all dwellings are periodically cleaned, and the spiritual and material rubbish are then removed together, more or less.

There is also a spiritual counterpart of everything you write; and a spirit can reproduce a materialised counterpart—that is, he can temporarily *re-materialise* the spiritual counterpart where your portion has been

burnt—by the aid of laws that you see in operation, at what is called a materialisation *séance*, such as have been frequently witnessed in the presence of mediums like Miss Shower, Miss Florence Cook, and others. The latter phenomena are simply the materialisation of the spirit body of persons who formerly lived on your earth in the flesh, and are enabled to re-clothe themselves for the time being in matter borrowed from the mediums, and the persons forming the circle. When, therefore, you see a spirit form clothed in white drapery, you may assume it is an exact materialised reproduction of the spirit matter composing the dress and body of the spirit who thus shows herself or himself. As, however, the matter they are clothed in is taken from the bodies of persons in the flesh—principally, however, from the medium—it has, at first, a tendency to shape itself into forms resembling more or less the person of the medium. Hence, every spirit who thus re-clothes himself or herself through a new medium, bears a considerable resemblance to the latter—a circumstance, however, which investigators naturally regard as exceedingly suspicious. It is, however, no more so than the resemblance which one person bears to another, whose garment he may have borrowed. When the power becomes stronger, it is, however, found that the resemblance to the medium diminishes.

This digression from the subject of death has been rather a lengthy one ; but we are pleased if we have afforded you any explanation of questions which naturally arise in the mind when learning of the

new laws and new theories at variance with your former experience. We were saying that the spirit is not freed from the body without a struggle—that is to say, the spirit body struggles to free itself from the earthly body, and then rises up from the latter as fresh and vigorous as a young man. Should the body be that of an old man, the spirit appears as he was when in his prime ; thus there are no old people in the spirit world, although spirits retain their mental characteristics after death. A young man, with the thoughts of an old man, may look like an old man in the eyes of one whose thoughts are youthful and fresh. Each spirit sees other spirits according as their thoughts are, and if these are foul, the thinker appears foul in his *body* for the same reason as we before explained, that the garments of the thinker appear unclean if his ideas are so. Again, if he is miserly,—*i.e.*, having thoughts engrossed with material instead of spiritual things—he appears to us (*i.e.*, to those more advanced than himself) as a man who is poverty-stricken in regard to spiritual advantages, simply because he has never “laid up treasures in heaven.” Hence, you see that a man whose thoughts have always been “of the earth earthy”—however rich he may have been with you—is a *pauper* in our world, because material possessions are of no avail to the spirit. He may have been clothed in purple and fine linen when he died, but he will rise up in the eyes of the spirit world a miserable creature, clothed in rags.

Although we say that the old man rises up a

young one in the spirit world, it does not follow that he is more attractive on that account to others. In their eyes he may look a very repulsive creature notwithstanding his youth. On the other hand, although his thoughts are his clothes, they do not alter the appearance of his body in the eyes of himself and those on his own level. To the latter he appears precisely the same as he was on earth when in his prime. He sees no difference; and since all men fail "to see themselves as other see them," so is it also with us. You say such a man is a "bear" or a "cur," or a "donkey," or a "fox," and so it is with us. They see not themselves as others see them; but like the human bear and the human donkey, they think they are very amiable and intelligent people. Of course, if every one they met with thought the same, there would be no punishment for such people; but as that is not the case, and as every person they meet shows by his looks how they are regarded by others, the consequence is that the spirit who possesses these characteristics soon feels that he is not liked. Now it is a law in your world as in ours, that "like attracts like," hence the man who is not liked, flees from those who dislike him, because their company makes him unhappy, and he therefore seeks the companionship of those who do not see him in the same light,—that is to say, of those who are on his own level; for in the eyes of such people his evil qualities are not so patent.

The higher spirits advance the greater their spiritual range of vision, and the more they can divine of the

thoughts and conditions of those beneath them. You have heard it said that spirits have appeared to human beings like animals. The reason of this is, because the spiritual condition of the latter enables them to see the spirit's true nature, just as they would do were they already in the spirit world ; in short, it is the *spiritual* eyesight of the person on earth which sees them, not the physical eyes ; and as the spirit of the embodied man is the same in its relationship to disembodied spirits, both whilst he is still on earth and afterwards, it follows that he sees them in precisely the same light that he would do if he were already in the spirit world. As he does not see them with his natural eyesight, but with his spiritual eyesight, he is, of course, temporarily clairvoyant. The vision is said to be subjective, not objective, and merely a fancy of the brain. If the animal were a real animal—objective instead of subjective—it could only be produced by spirit power, through the *materialisation* of a spirit who had some means of assuming that form—*i. e.*, by clothing himself in the magnetic emanations from some dog, or other animal, who, either then or previously, had lived much in the place in question. We have heard of such a case, but do not know whether it has ever been authenticated, that any such apparition was objective like a materialised spirit form. If it were merely subjective, it could not be seen but by the spiritual eyesight of the person present ; hence it would be merely a spirit whose undevelopment caused him to appear in their eyes as an animal. They would not all see him in the same guise, unless they were all persons of

equal spiritual development. Those amongst them who were the most animal in their natures would see less of the animal in the spirit and more of the man.

You are not to suppose from what we have told you that the spirit world appears to a man of superior spiritual development, as peopled with animals, though it might seem from what we have told you to be the case. You can bring yourself into closer sympathy with these unfortunate beings if you like, and then you see them as men and women in all their spiritual hideousness. If, however, you merely regard them at a distance, so to speak,—for distance with us has no signification, excepting in regard to our *bodies*, which have nothing to do with the interchange of thought—you will only see their leading characteristics. A man may, of course, have several traits of character, all differing in their mode of expression. In this case he would, of course, appear as a composite animal. You will have read in Mrs. Crowe's "Night Side of Nature," and other books, of animals appearing in haunted houses—half dog, half pig, or some such combination. These would be persons of that class, and if you had spoken to them you would have seen, not the animal but the man. We will tell you what we saw ourselves on a recent visit to an old house that has the reputation of being haunted. In one part of the house, there was an old-fashioned door, leading to a closet that had formerly been used for storing lumber, and out of this came the former proprietor of the house. To us he appeared like the mixture of a bull and a bear, with a touch of the fox in his nature.

On speaking to him, he simply proved to be a turbulent, overbearing, cunning old man, who had formerly lived there, and been the cause of much unhappiness to others from his violent temper and overbearing manners. When we addressed him, he appeared as a human being, but horribly disfigured by his passions, and he departed in a furious tempest of oaths and curses. Here was a sample of the kind of appearance men put on in the eyes of spirits higher than themselves—they are not really animals, but their passions make them look like animals. It is something like an optical illusion.

We should like to add a reference to the state of the spirit body when the person dies intoxicated. In such cases the spirit body is more or less in a state of coma; and this condition induces a species of delirium which lasts for some time, and causes the spirit to imagine himself in a strange country, so to speak, though really not in any other place than that where he died. Thus, you have read of spirits fancying themselves on the borders of swampy lakes, in gloom and darkness, when all the while the spirit body may be really only in its own room where the death took place. These unfortunate creatures picture to themselves scenes that have no objective reality, but are merely the working of a diseased imagination, just as in the case of *delirium tremens* with you. Clairvoyants have frequently described such scenes, and you naturally imagine they are describing what really exists in the spiritual world; but it is not the case. There are, of course, swamps and morasses in the spirit world,

and caverns and gloomy places of all kinds, but they are not necessarily the physical surroundings of those who seem to dwell in them, and describe their supposed condition through clairvoyants and others. These are merely the inner states of the minds of these unfortunate beings. Thus, the inner state of the man we described as having been seen by us in the old hall prevented him from seeing the place in the same light that we did. To us it was a grand, historical, picturesque old building, and we could live there pleasantly enough had we no better scenery in our own sphere, and were disposed to be the inmates of such a place; but to him there seemed no beauty or picturesqueness about it. In his eyes all was loathsome as himself: he knew no happiness there, consequently he could see none in it; he likened it to hell itself, and never spent a moment of peace within its walls. It was, therefore, nothing less than a gloomy, miserable prison in his eyes, filled with loathsome reptiles and all sorts of noisome things, that made his flesh creep whenever he encountered them.

You want to know whether there is no reality in these appearances, since so many miserable spirits have described themselves as inhabiting similar places with like surroundings, whilst other persons believe the spirit world is a place of mental scenery only, having no objective reality, but being merely the creation of each person's fancy. To some extent this is so; at the same time it is quite true, as we said before, that there is an exact spiritual counterpart of all that exists in your world, and that this spiritual counterpart is

solid and material to our senses, and has the same properties of colour and general appearance that your world has to you. We should have said, however, that this is only the case with those who have attained such development as to have reached the Summerland. To them the world you inhabit is much pleasanter than to yourselves and to the spirits who dwell in it, because they see it as it really is, whereas scarcely any of those spirits who live on the earth plane see it in the same light; at least, not until they have progressed sufficiently to be able to rise higher when so disposed. Nearly all persons who are imperfect, have hallucinations in the spirit world which cause them to see their surroundings in a distorted light,—that is to say, their minds are influenced by their own thoughts. Thus, the miser sees nothing but bags of gold, the drunkard nothing but drink, and the man of the world nothing but worldly pleasures. After all, they are not in a very different condition to what they were when in the body. Their whole thoughts were then engrossed with these subjects, such being the topics they most cared to think about. It is, therefore, quite natural that, after death, the same subjects should occupy their minds, since the mind belongs to the spirit, not to the physical body lying in the grave, and is not in the least altered by death, excepting that it becomes more vivid. The result of this is that the principal phenomena in the material world become obliterated after death; and their thoughts dwell so much upon their favourite topics that, in time, all outward appearances are

entirely obliterated, and they see only the subjects they think of, which, instead of being merely imaginary beings, take the appearance of living objective realities. This is probably incomprehensible to you, but nevertheless it is quite true. You think that, according to this theory, all spirits on the earth plane must be more or less intoxicated, or labouring under delusions. We should have said that the condition we have depicted does not apply solely to those who die in a state of intoxication, but to all persons whose minds are crooked in the sense of not being healthy. Few men on earth have perfectly unbiased minds. They are all more or less warped by circumstances, and habits of thought and body, and must live some time on the earth plane before they can rise to a higher plane of existence, and see things as they really are.

We do not mean to say that the whole of the spirit inhabitants of the earth plane see reptiles, and such like objects: their minds are differently coloured, according to their thoughts. Those whose minds have dwelt on filthy subjects will see filthy objects. Those whose minds have dwelt solely on mercenary objects, must have neglected to cultivate feelings of love for others, and are therefore selfish, cold, and unloved. As a natural consequence, their thoughts dwell on themselves and their possessions, and they never see their friends or kin, because none such ever occupied their thoughts. They must, therefore, be lonely and miserable, and will find themselves, to all intents and purposes, in a bleak, cheerless waste, as objective to them as the desert of Sahara. Another who

has been intent on gambling and dissipation finds himself in a hell of gamblers and lewd women, who tear his vitals out, so to speak, in their frantic hatred and vengeance for injuries done in the body. The drunkard finds himself in the company of drunkards, and although he may be, in point of fact, attracted to his old haunts in gin palaces, etc., his imagination leads him to believe he is in some strange place, where he is surrounded by fiends in human shape—for such in reality men become when they give way to drink. You rightly conclude that the hell of the drunkard must therefore be the nearest approach to orthodox hell, as theologians picture it, which any sinners have to endure. You see that it is entirely mental. There is no physical change in the surroundings of the man after death. He imagines he is in such a place, and for all practical purposes, as far as he is concerned, he is so.

The same law applies to the man of science. We see him from our point of view searching the world over in pursuit of his favourite study; but he sees the world from his own standpoint, and may never meet anything beautiful in it, because he has never cultivated a love of the beautiful. There are infinite degrees of mental blindness, and we cannot find space to follow each man's career, or show you how the world appears to him.

The clergyman who has not risen above the earth plane lives in an atmosphere of darkness more or less, and so it is with all who want knowledge. Knowledge, or rather wisdom, is light in the spirit

world in very truth, and those who have the most wisdom see the most. We do not mean knowledge such as you understand it, for according to your point of view the clergyman would be a man of knowledge, but knowledge of the good and the pure in human nature. That is the true knowledge that Christ taught—Love of Mankind; for it is impossible to know our duty in life without knowing that the highest wisdom is to do good.

Thus you see how completely men create their own future surroundings by their thoughts and mode of life here on earth. Whatever most occupies your thoughts here will become your actual surroundings in the spirit world. By this you must not understand that you enjoy your surroundings there as you enjoy your thoughts here. Here you think about those subjects that afford you the most pleasure, but in the next life it is those subjects that become your actual surroundings, *to the exclusion of all else*. It is there where you feel your unhappiness. To be shut up with your own thoughts may or may not afford you happiness. It is for you to judge, now that you understand the meaning of hell, whether you will make it a place of torment or a place of joy,—a place where you can see things as they are, or a place where you see only the creations of your own fancy, believing them to be realities.

The foregoing remarks, about the distorted appearance which the spirit world assumes to unhappy spirits, apply more particularly to those whose thoughts have been exercised too much upon one topic, which pro-

duces a species of moral insanity, causing the illusions we speak of, and producing unhappiness to the person afflicted.

You must not suppose that the thoughts of a good man will also be illusive in the spirit world. If he thinks* about himself they will be ; but if he knows true wisdom he will not let self occupy too much of his thoughts—in fact, his thoughts will be almost entirely taken up with the love of his fellow-men ; and in this there can be no deception, for if he meets them after death, how can he be said to live in a subjective world ? It is only those who are morally blind that see the spirit world in the way we have mentioned.

You think that because a bad man flees to the company of those who are like himself he may be happy in their society ; but you are mistaken. Such men generally hate one another, and lead most unhappy lives ; for it does not follow that they will *love* one another simply because they have something in common. “Like attracts like ;” but we prefer to follow the example of those who are better than ourselves, not those who have the same faults as we have. The people in question are not blind to their own faults, though they may think their faults are justifiable. They know, of course, that a bad temper is not a good temper ; but they think they are justified in their outbursts of passion, and that their loss of equanimity is merely the expression of righteous indignation. You are mistaken in supposing that they must admire themselves if they justify themselves

in their own eyes. They do not; although they may think that they are right and other people are wrong. The thief thinks he is justified in stealing, but he does not admire himself for it; *he* thinks he has not done any wrong, but he would prefer to have done something that *others* did not think wrong. This is a principle which we think we have proved to be a sound one, notwithstanding your difficulties in accepting it. To give you a further proof of it, we have only to point to the case of a miser, who loves money himself, but thinks all other misers are mean; and so in other instances which we might refer to. The fraudulent tradesman, for example, does not admire the dishonesty of his competitors in trade, though he regards his own delinquencies with a lenient eye, because he thinks he is somehow or other justified in what he does. If you apply the principle to other cases you will find we have stated it correctly.

We have already shown you how punishment follows the evil-doer on his entrance into the spirit world. Because of the absence of flatterers to mislead him he sees himself universally shunned by those whose society he would court. Hence he avoids it, and feels hurt at their want of kindness and sympathy. As, moreover, it is another law of human nature that we cannot be happy *without* sympathy, it follows that the want of it must produce unhappiness in all men, be they ever so hardened and selfish. No man can attain happiness—which in some form or other all men do strive for, be their

standard of felicity ever so false—without the sympathy of his fellow-men; consequently, immediately a man enters the spirit world, and finds that he has forfeited the good opinion of those whose society he desires to enjoy, his punishment becomes a necessary consequence of his wrong-doing.

You are unable to understand how it is that a man can desire to get into society in the spirit world, where men are merely divided according to their *moral* worth, not their *social* standing. No doubt the altered state of affairs renders the state of society in the two worlds very different, and you find it difficult to comprehend what sort of society we allude to. The fact is, that there are on the earth plane quite as many different grades of society amongst spirits as there are with you. Men need society, even if they are unhappy; and those of like tastes—be they ever so vicious—will flock together, and those of less harmful inclinations will also feel attracted to one another. They need not necessarily be in a higher spiritual sphere to form a higher grade of society. You do not suppose that a refined, well-bred, but selfish, man would care in the spirit world to associate with an ill-bred man, whom he would have loathed in the flesh. Spiritually they may both be equally unprogressed, but neither will feel drawn to the other on that account, and each will regard the other with loathing, though in the flesh the former may have tolerated the latter for the sake of his wealth, and the latter may have patronised the former for the sake of his social rank. In the spirit world, where such

distinctions are of no account, such men have no motive for concealing their mutual dislike, and, as a consequence, they hate one another.

You see, by this, that there is infinite variety in the way of society in the spirit world, and that it is quite possible for a man to wish to get into the society of those who do not admire or desire him. As before stated, these persons may not be spiritually more advanced than he is himself, but this does not prevent them from seeing his faults,—that is, they see those peculiarities in the other which they have the least sympathy with, or, in other words, which they themselves do not possess. This is the only sense in which they are progressed enough to be able to judge of the character of one beneath them. Almost every spirit, however low, can find one lower than himself, with whom he declines to associate. This is a law which holds good, and finds abundant illustration in both your world and ours.

You think a bad man may be content with the sympathy of other bad men, but that is a mistake. He may get their admiration for a time, but that will not last long, since wickedness is a subject that will not bear admiring so long as goodness, and his admirers will soon fall off when they begin to see more of him.

You may accept it as another truism, that all men have an innate sense of right and wrong, be it ever so dwarfed, and that men are not *loved* in the spirit world excepting for the *good* that is in them. With you it is different. Hence you think that a man may

be loved by people of the same stamp as himself, and be quite happy, however bad he may appear to those above him. This arises from the world's standard of right and wrong being so different from that which appertains with us. Here a man is judged for what he really is; with you, it is for what he *seems*. He may be as foul within as he likes, if the exterior is polished, and fair to see. The world applauds him, and he does not feel much sense of shame, because even the most modest men are apt to think that those who praise them are justified in doing so.

To return once more to our former subject. We were tracing the first experiences of a man on entering the spirit world. As already stated, he finds himself the same individual in feeling as he was previous to his removal from your world. One difference, however, soon becomes apparent to him: whereas, previously, his memory—in his later years at least—had been clogged by the infirmities of the body, now there is no such obstacle, and the whole of his past life stands revealed before him. You must understand that the memory appertains to the spirit, and not to the body; and it is one of the few qualities of mind that the materialist has been puzzled to account for, because, though every particle of the matter of which the brain is composed may change, there remains indelibly impressed on the mind the recollection of the past experience of the individual from the days of his childhood. If, however, these impressions had belonged to the *matter* of the brain,

they would have been swept away long since in the course of the perpetual changes that are going on in the organism of the human body. In answer to this argument, it is said that scars and wounds, and other physical impressions, will remain on the face and hands of the individual throughout the whole of his life, and that, therefore, the continued existence of memory, notwithstanding the physical changes in the substance of the brain, may be accounted for by the materialist in the same way that he accounts for the continued existence of the scars and wounds in spite of the physical changes in the skin. To this we reply that the one is an impression on *matter*, which is not so with the other, for no materialist contends that mind is matter; he merely argues that mind or thought is one of the functions of the brain, and when the brain ceases to exist there is no longer any mind.

You say it might be contended that each thought is a sort of indentation or scar in the matter of the brain, and remains there in the materialistic sense precisely as does the scar on the face or hand. This argument may be ingenious, but it is not corroborated by medical science, for in such a case the brain would become so indented in different individuals as to differ in each person, whereas medical men see no such difference. In the case of scars, on the contrary, the bodies of all men may be differently so marked, and each scar will leave a separate impression. The cases, therefore, are not, in our opinion, analogous.

On entering the spirit world, as we said before, the man finds the obstructions to his memory removed. You are sometimes surprised to observe in old people the vivid recollection of the scenes and events of their early childhood; and in many others there is a tendency, as life advances, to dwell with especial interest on the friends of their youth. The reason of this, lies in the facts, that the body is beginning to loosen its connection with the spirit previous to death. When the final severance comes the whole past stands revealed like a panorama, and all that is bad is a constant source of self-reproach and consequent unhappiness to the individual, whilst that which is good affords him pleasure. This evidence of the past, which may be called the "black book" and the "white book" that you read of in Scripture, is thus laid open by death to the eyes of each man immediately on his entrance into the spirit world. Thus you see he is unhappy or happy, according as he has done well or ill in his life on earth. And not only is the past life laid bare to himself, but it is patent also to all his friends, for the spirit shows in his *person* the sort of life he has led in the past, and he cannot change the appearance of the picture until he has obliterated the recollection of all that was evil by making restitution to those he has wronged and obtaining the forgiveness of those he has injured.

You want to know how it is that the picture is changed by such acts of compensation. When the feelings of others towards such a man are changed, his own memory of the past becomes dimmed;

because there is nothing left to remind him of it; until eventually it fades away altogether. He has difficulty in recalling it. This explains why advanced spirits are seldom able to give you much information about their past lives, where their earth life happens to have been unhappy, for the rule in question also holds good in regard to those who were unhappy—not necessarily to the evil ones only. These like to lose the recollection of the past, because it makes them happier, and so they cannot tell you much about their former history. When you consider how few people are really perfectly happy on earth, you can easily understand that the memories of most spirits, whose communications are worth having, touching their earthly lives—and especially with reference to names and dates—is not likely to be vivid enough to give tests of their identity. This is the general rule; but there may, of course, be many exceptions. In the case of persons who have not wiped out the recollection of their earth lives, owing to their not having made compensation, or by reason of their continuing to cherish feelings of resentment against those who have injured them, the memory is more vivid, and they can give you better tests of their identity. You think that a bad man who has injured a number of good people would, therefore, be better off than a bad man who has incurred the enmity of bad people, because the former will be more forgiving when they find that the non-forgiveness of others impedes their own happiness and prevents their rising in the spirit world. There is some truth in

this, for if there be no resentment against a bad man in the minds of others, it is less painful for him; in fact, there is no pain to him from that source. Hence many wrongful acts and words may never be compensated for, because the person injured may never have harboured any feelings of resentment against the wrong-doer. This shows how Nature works out compensations for all, since the person injured must have been of a contented disposition, or he would have felt the injury more; unless he subsequently became so happy that he was then readily able to forget the wrong done to him. The man who has done the wrong must, nevertheless, obtain forgiveness; for the mere consciousness that the person injured bears him no ill-will does not remove his own *recollection* of the crime. *He must be forgiven* by some one, and there is no one to forgive him—not even God himself—but the man he has injured. Do not suppose we mean to say that there is no God. Far be such a thought from our minds. We merely say that the God who made the injured man delegates to *him* the power to forgive the wrong done to him, and, in exercising that power, both giver and receiver are spiritually benefited.

We will now trace the subsequent experiences of the man whose entry into the spirit world we have just described. He is met by his spirit friends, if he has any. You wish to know here how he makes his spirit friends, and if they are necessarily good ones, or whether they may be the reverse. In regard to the last part of the question, we know too well that they

are not all good ones who welcome the spirit on his entrance into the spirit world. The scenes that follow the death of a bad man are more easily imagined than described, when we tell you that all those whom he has injured take a pleasure—if they are really bad enough to do so, or the injury has been so great as to warrant it, and his other friends do not protect him—in making him miserable on his first arrival in their midst. They know that he will think he is not dead, but merely *haunted*, and that they are the ghosts of his former victims; and this he really does believe in many instances, and is almost driven mad with horror and fear. Yes, there is madness in the spirit world too; but it is not like your madness. The brain does not become unhinged—that is an affliction which is not needed to add to the miseries of the spirit world. He flees from them and they pursue him until at length, driven by despair and rage to face them, he finds that his tormentors are only ordinary human beings like himself, who hate him for the wrongs he has done them, but cannot injure him physically. He accordingly recovers from his alarm, and they leave him to his own devices; it being no further satisfaction to them to persecute him, since they know that his own thoughts will be torment enough for him. He cannot obtain relief from his own thoughts, as he could on earth, by drinking or pleasure seeking, because his thoughts are ever present, and his mind is incapable of being directed to anything else. A man on earth, though very much in the same predicament, can often drown his

memory by taking a narcotic. We have said that there may be friends who will protect him against the annoyance of his enemies. This is sometimes the case, but it does not follow that they are necessarily good spirits who do even this for him. They may be his boon companions, who admire him; just as one thief admires the pluck or skill of another. These soon explain it all to him and he then ceases to be afraid.

This is one of the penalties that men have to pay for the ignorance and blindness of the world of science and religion touching matters spiritual. We have shown the agony of the good man, and we have shown the fear of the evil man. The future career of the former we will now enlarge upon.

He is met by his spirit friends as already explained, and these friends are those who have been the spirit associates of his earth-life, or, rather, the associates of his spirit; for he makes friends in both worlds at the same time. He is awake in the spirit world nearly as long as he is awake in your world; and when he is asleep on the earth side, he is awake on the spirit side of his life; the only difference between the two states being that the spirit body does not sleep while the natural body is awake, but walks about intersphered with the natural body, and looks to us like a man in his sleep—being, from our point of view, deaf, dumb, and blind, or a man only half-awake. Thus, you see, you lead two lives at the same time; and a man may make a name and a reputation in both worlds at once, or in one only; for it often happens—indeed, it is most commonly the case—that men,

whom we think the most of, are least thought of by you. Many a poor man is a power in the spirit world, and will have a name awaiting him when he enters spirit life which kings might envy.

You wonder how a man can be responsible, when he sleeps, for what his spirit may say and do in the spirit world ; but you must remember that *the spirit is the real man*, and it is not what the body does that will affect his future life, but what the spirit controlling that body may do through the body, which is its instrument for communicating with, and operating in, your world. It is true, you are only conscious (so far as the body is concerned) of one-half of your life. The other half is hidden from you in order that you may be less influenced by the surroundings in the spirit world, and be able to take in your experience in each world separately, so far as consciousness permits. If you could see both worlds at once, as some people have had the power of doing—Swedenborg, for instance—it would cause some confusion in your mind, and render you less practical and useful in your sphere on earth. You could not take due care of the body, and build up the spirit, if you were subject to such confusion as would arise from your inability to tell which was material and which was spiritual. The food on your table, for example, might be spiritual, and you might have to starve for want of means to buy the material food.

We were describing the experiences of a good man, and will now explain how he attracts his spirit friends ; for you must understand that all good men who have

departed to the spirit world live in the spheres above the earth sphere, and do not come down to you excepting as visitors. As a man lives, so is he known to us. We see his real character, and not the outward mask that is presented to the gaze of the world. This being so, we have no need to make any inquiries about a man. We can all see his true disposition at a glance; and in our visits to the earth we are attracted to kindred minds by a law of nature which is universal in both worlds, and causes "like to attract like;" so that a man of intelligence and refinement will attract men of the same class, whilst a stupid man will draw round him minds of his own calibre. This is not because they love him, but because they seek sympathy, and it is necessary for them to have it—being the food they live on. This law determines the nature of a man's spirit friends. If they come from the higher spheres, they are attracted to him from ties of love, or a desire to do him good, or benefit others through him. If they belong to the earth plane, they are drawn to him because his life is of more interest and excitement to them than the life of the disembodied spirits who remain on the earth plane.

You suppose there must be a great difference between the spirit before death and after; because, in the latter case, he seems to have no occupation such as you follow, who are compelled to work for your living, and have so many things to attend to every day in supplying the needs of the body, besides spending so much time in sleeping—all of which duties the spirit is freed from. This is a delusion which all people

have when they enter the spirit world. They think that if there is no occasion to work, to eat and drink, or to sleep, there is nothing left to do—a mistake which they soon find out; since, without occupation, they learn that happiness is unattainable. The want of occupation, in fact, is the cause of a great deal of unhappiness in your life also. If a man has nothing to do, his mind immediately begins to dwell on some special subject, according to the bent of his inclinations, and he fancies it is the most important subject in the whole world. He then becomes, with you, more or less insane, and he acts discordantly. This conduct produces unhappiness to himself and others; hence, if a thief, he works himself up to believe that he has a right to take other people's property, and he accordingly does so, and is punished for it. Afterwards, he repeats the offence, because he thinks he has been unjustly dealt with. If his motive has been hunger, you can easily understand how dwelling on that subject would make him in time believe that he was unjustly deprived of food, and that he had a right to take it.

There is more philosophy in the choice of an occupation than people are aware of. Since all persons in both worlds must have something to do, the question arises what sort of an occupation is most calculated to benefit a man afterwards in the spirit world? We answer, Such an occupation as he can continue when he gets there. He will then never have much unhappiness, for want of employment; for he will simply take up his labours where he left off, and if they have been useful, his occupation must have made him happy.

Hence the great thing is to select an occupation which is congenial and useful, and this, in our opinion, must be some form of beneficence. We do not mean that men who till the soil, or make shoes, are to go on with their old occupations in the spirit world, but nevertheless they must do something like other men; and, seeing that fields do not require tilling in the spirit world, nor are boots there needed, it follows that if such persons would be happy, they must then engage in *spiritual*, not material employments. Hence the necessity for all persons, whilst still on earth, to pursue occupations of a spiritual nature—not from a sense of disagreeable duty, but from a feeling of love. There are plenty of people who are engaged in spiritual employments in your world who are unfitted for what they have undertaken, and who are more actuated by an unpleasant sense of duty than by any love for what they are engaged in. Such persons, it is needless to say, are merely wasting their time. There are, unfortunately, so many such instances in the world of misplaced zeal, that it is necessary to explain, that no one can engage in such work in the next life who has not a real love for it. If he does it from any other motive but love, he will simply find himself out of employment when he reaches the spirit world, just as if his life had been spent in mercenary pursuits; since both ends are pursued from the same motive, namely, *self-interest*. Every one should try to find some congenial spiritual work to engage in, which in some way will tend to make others happier than they are. He will then find that the motive for employment will not

fail him, when he comes to labour for love in the life beyond the grave, and has to bear witness there to the consequences of ill-spent lives in others.

Do good in some form—that is our advice to those who long for an occupation. Is not your world peopled with unhappy men who want knowledge ; with neglected children, who require some one to care for them ; and with unhappy women who need love and sympathy such as Christ did not refuse ? Surely, none need wait long for something to do if they are in earnest.

Since occupation is a necessity for all men, it is not to be wondered at that when a man has nothing to do, on his arrival in the spirit world, he gets into mischief ; just as is the case with you on earth. He must do something, and so he amuses himself ; and, perhaps, if he has been a criminal, he revenges on society the injury he conceives that society did him in his earth life. Accordingly, he gets associated with a band of kindred minds who spend their time in indulging in their favourite vices, whether in the company of spirits in the flesh or spirits disembodied like themselves. They prefer, however, the society of the former, because their conversation is more interesting. These are not burdened with the recollection of ill-spent lives, but think and talk of the present, and this is an interesting subject for those out of the flesh as well as for you. You must not suppose we take no interest in what goes on in your world. We are just as much interested in the events of the day as you are. We read your newspapers, attend

your meetings, frequent your places of amusement, and, in fact, take part in everything but money making on our own account, though many do even that, if they are desirous of helping a friend in the flesh whom they have wronged during their earth lives. When we say spirits attend your meetings, we mean, of course, those who are intellectually advanced enough to take an interest in such things. Those who are not above the enjoyment of their passions, will not care to go, any more than they would on earth. As before stated, society on the earth plane is very like yours, excepting that the best men and women and all the children are weeded out. Still there are many comparatively good men amongst them, whose only fault is ignorance, like the clergyman and the man of science before mentioned.

You do not understand how spirits can attend meetings if the room is already filled with spirits in the body, and if, as we say, the spiritual counterpart of the earthly audience is material to our senses, for, in that case, you naturally conclude there would be no room for us. You are quite right, but, in point of fact, the spirit audience is not in your room at all, but in an adjoining room, where they can hear quite as well. This apartment they prepare for themselves by displacing the spiritual counterpart of your structure; thus having an apartment of their own entirely to themselves. You are mistaken in supposing we mean it to be necessarily on the same level as yours; it may be a few feet higher or lower, and it would then be clear of the spirit bodies of your audience. So also

is it with the houses which spirits inhabit; they could not live in the spiritual counterpart of your houses without altering their position, because they would never have any peace in being obliged constantly to get out of the way of the spirit bodies of the earthly occupants. You think this sounds rather ridiculous, but it is a very simple and natural state of things from our point of view. We do not require architects and builders to make all these alterations as you assume, because the *will*-power of the spirit is the motive power with us. It is not mechanical at all, so that if a spirit were in the same house as his earthly relations, and he found it inconvenient to be constantly in their way, he would naturally *wish* that the room were removed or the inconvenience remedied in some other way; and in proportion as he exercised his will-power, and to the strength of *will* he brought to bear on it, would this object be accomplished. In short,—*will-power is, with us, what mechanical force is with you.* There must be intelligence to direct it of course. If you try to pull a house down or alter it, and you are strong enough to do so, you will succeed, but you will do it clumsily. So with the spirit; his will-power being the force by which spiritual matter is displaced, renders him able to effect the alteration required in a more or less intelligent manner. You think that every person would have will-power enough to do this if it could be done by simply wishing; but we assure you that it is not the case. In private houses spirits live on in the same old way, and have to be constantly interfered with by their friends in the flesh, whose spirit bodies—

ignoring their existence—trespass on their privacy, obstruct their movements, and render their lives a burden to them. All the while, these people could, by the simple exercise of sufficient will-power, remove themselves to other and better conditions; but they are so apathetic and phlegmatic that they cannot rouse themselves to do even this, until some one comes and does it for them. You have heard of spirits “in prison,” who go on living in the same wearisome way for years, and even for centuries, after their lives in the body have terminated, without ever thinking of changing their mode of life. If some one does not sooner or later find them out, and take pity on them, and rouse them to some exercise of their wills, they would, probably, never be any happier. In out-of-the-way places such cases are much more common; and in ships, lonely forests, or on desert islands, they have occasionally been met with. They are, however, such rare cases compared with the numbers who live in more populous places, that we have ourselves not met with any examples of the kind, although we know persons who have.

In such cases the individual must be friendless, or he would be taken away by his spirit friends. The instances of ships sailing on the deep after the material counterpart has gone down—the fabled “phantom ships” of sailors—are not such highly improbable stories as many wiseacres may suppose. They occur where the ship has taken fire, because in such events—as has been already explained—the connection between the spiritual counterpart and the material

counterpart is immediately severed, and the spiritual counterpart remains intact and does not go down, as in the case of a ship which founders. In the latter case the disembodied spirits understand what has happened ; in the former case they most frequently do not.

In a case of foundering, when they find themselves at the bottom of the ocean, they rise at once, as spirits, to the surface, by the force of their will-power, which involuntarily induces them to reach the surface again as the first thing to do. When there, and they find their ship is gone, they see their situation at a glance, and their thoughts naturally revert to their homes and friends, in which direction they are spontaneously drawn by the force of their affection, which is sufficient to attract the spirit-body thither. In the case, however, of a ship destroyed by fire, the persons who have just been drowned, and must, therefore, now be called *spirits*, find themselves, along with the material bodies they lately inhabited, floating about in the water; they see the ship, or rather its spiritual counterpart, intact, consequently—as it appears to their spiritual eyesight—the same vessel they just saw burnt down. Since the spiritual ship is equally material to their spiritual touch, they naturally conclude that they have been washed overboard, and that the fire was merely a dream, or that it has been put out; hence they wish themselves on board again. By force of this exercise of their wills they soon find themselves there. They then see no difference between things now and things as they were before, and may go on in the old course of life, for years, perhaps, never finding out

that there has been any change in their condition. They cannot reach the shore, because the ship is unable to approach the land, owing to the strong magnetic currents that sweep round the shores of the spiritual counterpart of your ocean, thus preventing all navigation. The reason they do not leave the vessel is because their thoughts are centred on it in an unusual degree. Those who have made a long voyage know the feeling of regret with which they leave the ship that has been their home for so many months, and this is the same tie that keeps the spirit tied to the vessel in the case under discussion. The ship becomes impregnated with the magnetism of the passengers and crew, and they cannot release themselves, in the same way that people clinging to their old homes on land may do, because of their being so entirely isolated from the rest of mankind. They see other ships pass them which are navigated by men in the body; but the latter being unable to see *them*—excepting in cases where some one amongst the passengers is clairvoyant—take no notice of them and pass them by. It is possible, of course, that such a vessel might run them down; but this could not easily happen, simply because their will-power is sufficient to control the movements of their own vessel and keep them out of danger, and they are never asleep, because they experience no night.

It is quite true as you say, that in the case of houses destroyed by fire, we told you that the inhabitants were released by the fire; whereas, in the case of the ship, we now tell you that the reverse takes place.

This is owing to the fact, that, in the former instance, the magnetic particles, adhering to the walls of the material house, become disintegrated, and fall to the ground, thus losing their attractive power ; whereas, in the case of the ship, the hull of the vessel keeps afloat, and into it the magnetic particles fall, and there being no surroundings to suggest the real state of the case to the passengers, they have no reason whatever to believe that they are free to leave the vessel, and still cling to it, and form a fresh attachment to it. This is partly owing to the continued existence of the floating remnant of the old ship, which, not having been burnt, is still associated with its spiritual counterpart.

The spirits so imprisoned are sometimes released by the arrival of friends from the shore, who, on passing into the spirit world, feel a longing to know what has become of their missing friends, and are attracted to them by this longing; but if the latter have not attained to some degree of spiritual development, they are not able to find their friends in mid-ocean, as their powers of locomotion would not permit them to leave the shore. Spirits who have risen above the earth plane can travel to all parts of the earth by the simple exercise of their will-power. Thus you see this is another cause for such people being detained for so many years in their prison—for such, in fact, it is. When the relations or friends of some of them fetch them away, they probably fail to make the rest of the passengers understand where they are going, or the latter account for their disappearance by assuming that they have fallen

overboard and been drowned. The disappearance of any of their number does not even tend to release the survivors ; but if the person who has been released has any interest or affection for those whom he has quitted, he will, in all probability, return sooner or later, and release them likewise.

You wish to know how it is that the spirit guides—those from a higher sphere—do not inform these imprisoned spirits of the change they have undergone. The reason is, simply because higher spirits cannot always convince those beneath them of facts which they may desire to communicate, since the persons to be convinced are not always disposed to listen to them. This is the case with you in the flesh also. You reject our communications for the same reason. You assume, however, that after death spirits on the earth plane can get communications from the higher spirits much more readily than you can get them from us, but you are mistaken. We cannot, as you imagine, show ourselves whenever we like to those beneath us, and convince them of the error of their ways by ocular demonstration of spirit guardianship. Our means of communication is a little better than yours, but, as hereafter explained, the higher spirits see the lower ones, whilst the latter are not cognisant of the presence of the former. Hence, when it is desired to communicate between those in a higher sphere and those on a lower plane—we do not mean between those on the earth plane who may be more advanced than their neighbours, for these are all alike visible to one another, but between spirits in the Summer-

land, for instance, and spirits on the earth plane—a special effort is required, and special conditions must exist, as is the case with you. Spirit communion is practised in our world just the same as with you, only we obtain higher and more perfect manifestations. Should, however, a spirit, who knows nothing of spirit communion, see a messenger from a higher sphere, he is unable to comprehend the meaning of it, fancies he has seen an angel, and becomes alarmed, or runs away with the idea that it is a ghost. This sounds very absurd to you, but nevertheless it is true. There is as much superstition and bigotry on the subjects of Spiritualism and spirit-communion amongst spirits, as there is amongst those in the flesh; nor is it to be wondered at when you consider with what prejudices people are sent out of your world into ours, and how little change they experience in their mode of life and surroundings. The spirit world is so material to their senses, that they cannot realise the existence of spirit at all, still less that they themselves are spirits.

You are mistaken, therefore, in supposing that the higher and lower spirits are intermingled in your thoroughfares, and equally visible to all of us. Those who are on the earth plane see only earthly spirits; those from a higher sphere see both classes. It is entirely dependent on the spiritual development of each man how much of the spirit world and its inhabitants he sees.

The mode of life led by spirits on the earth plane is a very interesting subject even for us, and we think

it has been sadly neglected by spiritualists and spirits, who seem too much to prefer discussing the mode of life in heaven—*i.e.*, the Summer-land—rather than taking an interest in what goes on in their midst. They are thus liable to encourage communicating spirits to enlarge upon the former topic rather than the latter. To those who desire to understand the philosophy of spirit-communion, the study of the earth plane is much more important than cultivating an acquaintance with the mode of life in the higher spheres ; for all spirits who communicate must either, for the time being, be present in person on the earth plane—and are then subject to the laws which appertain to it—or they must communicate through an intermediary who dwells there. We should like, nevertheless, to add a few words upon the subject of spirit life in the higher spheres. You have naturally a desire to know how those fare in the next life who do possess some of the spiritual qualities we have mentioned as being necessary for the spirit's progress to higher spheres than the earth plane. Where a person lives a life of self-denial on earth, he is pretty certain to be well rewarded in the next life. By self-denial we mean the suppression of self, which is the great thing needed to secure your future happiness. You think this is only selfishness in a new form ; because many people make their earthly lives miserable with a view of ulterior benefits in the life to come. Will not these people be the happiest, you ask, if our theory be correct ? No ; such as you have in your mind will certainly not be happy hereafter by

reason of any such sacrifices as those we have named, because their object has been self-interest, and not the gratification of a genuine love for their fellow-men. Self-denial, as we understand it, is not the self-denial of earthly enjoyments, but the sharing of our own enjoyments with others. In short, to find our own happiness in the pleasure of seeing others happy—that is our notion of self-denial. You think this is a very agreeable definition of self-denial; but you must not forget that one has a duty to oneself as well as to others, and the correct performance of our duty to others involves—firstly, the correct performance of our duty to ourselves; because you cannot be happy in doing good unless you are yourself in a good state of health of mind and body. You see, therefore, that doing good involves no self-sacrifice, but the highest self-seeking—not in the sense in which you understand the expression, but in a far higher and nobler sense—namely, the attainment, firstly, of your own spiritual good, and then, as a necessary consequence, the bestowal of that good upon others. In fact, you cannot be happy if you keep a good to yourself; you must learn to conquer self sufficiently to sacrifice something for others. The sacrifice, however, is not really such at all—it is only a distorted mental vision that makes it appear so. Ask any genuine philanthropist—Mr. Müller, Miss Rye, and others—whether their work involves any self-sacrifice. It is only in the eyes of the selfish that such labours as theirs appear to involve any self-sacrifice, since this implies that you give up something or somebody you

prefer to the something or somebody you are going to serve. If you are going to do what is right—in other words, what you feel qualified for—it cannot involve anything irksome when you once get fairly into it. Before you make the plunge, you may fear it will disagree with you, and so it may, no doubt, if you are not constitutionally suited for the work. If you are so, then your fears will vanish, and you will find yourself engaged in a really congenial occupation. You will feel that you were never so happy in your life, and you will laugh at the idea of self-sacrifice.

This is somewhat of a digression, but, nevertheless, it is important to point out that you may all lead true lives, without any great hardships to encounter, if you will only take the right road to find your peculiar sphere in life, and then strive to fulfil it.

Many people—how many, alas!—make their early lives miserable by torturing their natures into moulds they are unfitted for. They seek to be what they cannot, and they do harm where they might do good, through a mistaken notion that it is pleasing to the Almighty for them to become “servants of the Lord,” when they are naturally unfitted for the task. All men cannot be “apostles or prophets or teachers,” as St. Paul says. What we should do, is to find out where we can be of the most use, and try to carry out our dreams of usefulness in the way we are best qualified. Do not torture yourself into being or doing something you feel uncongenial, but pray for enlightenment, and a road will be opened up to you for doing good that will make you happy.

Those who lead such a life feel the meaning of the expression, "the Kingdom of Heaven is within you." For them, no need to wait until the grave close on the body in order to appreciate the happiness in store for them in the spirit world. It is already within and around them; and if they are in bodily health they need fear no trials or troubles in life, though many may crowd around them. They are protected by a shield of happiness which renders all the world a home to them, and all men their friends. This is not an unpractical dream: there are many men now alive who can bear witness to what we say. They never fear the agony of care and trouble which others endure through too much reliance on self. They rely entirely upon God and his messengers, their spirit friends, whom, perhaps, they are able to see and communicate with—a happiness unknown to those who walk in the darkness of the churches. We want you to see how absurd is the idea which many worldly minded people have, that so-called "goody-goody" persons—whom they do not understand, and, therefore, affect to despise or pity—are such pitiable specimens of men and women as they suppose. The best men are the best husbands, and the purest women are the best wives. This is admitted all the world over, and an involuntary homage is everywhere paid to maidenly beauty, which none but the basest of men and women would deny. No one supposes that virtue in this form is unattractive. Wherefore, then, should virtue be unattractive or ascetical, or in any other sense undesirable, when it occurs in the

form of love for one's fellow creatures and the desire to do good ; qualities which many men think it is a fine thing to sneer at and talk pityingly of. We cannot describe the happiness and joy which first meet the gaze of one who has led such a life on earth when death removes the screen that separates them from the immortal beyond. They imagine that all the fabled glories of the Christian's heaven are to be presented to their gaze, and that they will be transported to realms of bliss and glory such as they have dreamt of for years, but never dared hope to realise. Now comes the time when these long anticipated rewards are to be presented to view ; when the reputed Angel of Light will sit in judgment upon them, and they will be punished or rewarded according to their deserts. This is the state of the orthodox Christian who, notwithstanding his spiritual darkness, has earned his crown of spiritual love by deeds of charity done in the flesh, and deserves the reward he gets. He will be received by his friends too—just as the bad man—but, unlike the latter, he will not remain on the earth plane, but be at once conducted by gladsome spirits to the home of love in the Summer-land. This sphere is well known to all Spiritualists, having been so often described in other spiritual works, and in the writings of Andrew Jackson Davis,* that we do not think it within the province of this work to enlarge upon it.

* Obtainable from Mr. Burns, 15 Southampton Row, London, W.C. ; or the publishing offices, British National Institution of Spiritualists, 38 Great Russell Street, Bloomsbury, London, W.C.

We think you are labouring under the delusion that the spiritual world is subject to the same physical laws as your own. This is a frequent mistake with those who come from the earth plane into the spirit world. They think that it will be dark every twelve hours, and that they must provide against heat and cold. This is not the case. You think that because there is a spiritual counterpart to the matter on the earth, that, therefore, there is a spiritual counterpart to the gaseous products of the earth ; but this is not so, since the gaseous products of matter are themselves in the nature of spirit. Hence, they are unable to possess a spiritual counterpart. We have, therefore, no fog, smoke, mist, clouds, or other gaseous matter or vapour. There is a spiritual counterpart to water, but not to rain, which is vapour, and, therefore, not coming under our category of matter ; neither have we any counterpart of fire, which appertains only to your world. When you read of spirits seeing flames, vapour, fog, &c., you may assume that it is entirely subjective, and denotes the inner condition of the seer. We do not perceive such appearances, because we belong to a higher sphere, and, therefore, we say they have no objective reality to us. If we wish to penetrate into the inner state of unhappy spirits, we can see, by sympathy, the appearances which they are cognisant of. We see your fires, it is true, just as you see them, so far as regards the materials they consume ; but the products of combustion have no existence in the spirit world, neither do we perceive any heat from the fire, or any cold from the frost. Frozen water

appears the same to us as to you. Thus you see we lose a great many of the disagreeables as well as the agreeables of your life. People coming from your side of life find the spiritual world at first very enjoyable; the change from darkness, fog, rain, and cold, being rather delightful. We speak here, of course, of those who—as before explained—see things as they are, and who are not morally insane or hallucinated. They find themselves in the same locality they previously resided in, but all is changed as regards its climate. In their eyes the sky is ever cloudless, the sun is always shining, if not always visible—for, of course, it disappears below the horizon—and the streets are free from fog, smoke, and rain; and they feel neither thirst nor hunger. They soon miss the variety which those changes of the atmosphere afforded, and, perhaps, some would have preferred the old state of things. For our part, however, we think it is a blessing that the unfortunate wretches who dwell on the earth plane are not, in addition to their other troubles, distracted by a perpetual struggle with nature. You think the appearance of a town, such as we are describing, must be very bright and agreeable, but you would be sadly disappointed if you could see your own clean, well swept city as we see it. Instead of nice, well kept pavements, you would see masses of decaying spiritual substances everywhere, which no one takes the trouble to clear away. The town looks, indeed, like a veritable city of the dead, with no one to take any pride or interest in it. There are no trim houses, no neat windows, and no well kept gardens.

It is true we see the exact counterpart of what you see, in the same colours, and with the same distinctness in every respect; but we see a great deal more than you, just as we also see all the same people that are visible to you, and many more unsightly ones besides, of whom you are not cognisant. So we see also the old spiritual *débris* removed from houses that have been rebuilt or repaired after fires, and displaced more or less by the new buildings, but never removed; the sweepings of your houses, and the abandoned spiritual belongings of spirits. These *débris* being invisible to your eyes, remain where they were left, it may be centuries ago, thus giving your towns the appearance of being in a state of siege, when no one has had time to remove the remnants of ruined houses. The only persons who do anything of this kind are people in the flesh, who *unconsciously* remove things that impede the movements of their spirit bodies. Thus, when you go along the street, you having, as before stated, a spirit body, which is solid to our senses, must necessarily displace everything that comes in your way in the shape of spiritual matter. This seems incomprehensible to you; for, if the spirit matter which the spirit body thus comes in contact with is material in relation to the latter, then the spirit body must, you think, be constantly damaged by collisions. This is not the case, however, for the spirit body is in a partially changed condition, whilst the material body is awake. In the latter case, the spirit body, being unconscious, partakes more of the properties of the material body than of our spiritual bodies. To our senses the physi-

cal body, as we told you, is transparent and spiritual, not material at all, and it is *you* who appear to us to be the "ghosts," not we. When, therefore, the body is awake, the spirit is asleep, and partakes more of the attributes of the material body in its relation to spiritual substances, being entirely unconscious and insensible to pain; thus it can pass through or around anything in the spirit world that comes in its way without being in the least degree damaged. It is, however, not transparent to our eyes, but solid, though less so, perhaps, than when awake in the spirit world—*i. e.*, when *you* sleep. If, therefore, you should encounter a spiritual obstruction—for example, a chair, disconnected from its material counterpart, and therefore invisible to you—your spiritual body must either displace it by contact, or else (where there is resistance) pass completely through it. In this case the spiritual obstruction would be severed as by the blow of an axe; but your spirit body would not receive the slightest injury.

You think that to see people unconsciously walking through obstructions of this kind without evidencing any personal injury, must make life in your streets very like the comic business in a pantomime, but you may rely on its being familiar enough to all spirits. At first, of course, it causes all fresh observers from your world considerable amusement and astonishment, but the novelty soon wears off. We ought to observe here, that the spirit *body* is not so solid as *inanimate* spirit matter—that is to say, it is not with us relatively as solid as *your* material bodies are when

coming in contact with *your* matter. Hence the spirit body may be treated in a manner which your material bodies could not be subjected to without being injured. For instance, one spirit could not injure another spirit by striking him with an axe, or other weapon. The blow would simply glide off, because the will-power of the person assailed would be sufficient to ward off the blow, and prevent him from being injured. If, however, he were taken unawares, he could by his will-power also restore himself to his former condition without the aid of external remedies. Should he not exercise his will-power, or be too weak to do so, he might suffer some injury, but such cases are very rare, since the law of self-preservation would call forth sufficient will-power to shield a man from any serious consequences, and in any case the injury, as compared with the damage to the material body, would, comparatively speaking, be a very slight one.

Should a disembodied spirit come into collision with one in the flesh, the will-power of the former would not suffice to turn the latter out of the way and prevent a collision ; for the person in the flesh would not then be sensitive to the other's will-power, since during the daytime the will of the embodied spirit is dormant as regards the spirit world. The spirit body, whilst the material body is awake, is entirely subject to the will and control of its owner, who is for the time unconscious to all that goes on in the spirit world. It is quite true spirits out of the body do exercise considerable influence over your bodies, but that is not in the nature of a control exercised over

matter. Their influence is over the mind of the owner, who alone moves the body, to which he is attached by his will-power ; thus another spirit cannot control that person's body, excepting by displacing the spirit in possession, who is the only rightful owner. Should such a case occur, the person is to all intents and purposes " possessed of a spirit," or, if you prefer it, " possessed of a devil," who can only be dislodged by the exercise of superior will-power, which, as hereafter explained, can most easily be obtained by prayer. Many persons so affected are incarcerated in your asylums as insane. If you were to try the effect of our remedy in a *bona fide* case of " possession," we doubt not you would cure the case much more speedily than by confining the person with other weak-minded individuals.

The spiritual matter which we have alluded to as being in your streets is simply an eyesore, not a nuisance to our organs of sense. The reason we have no night is, because we have no vapour in the spirit world, and there is therefore nothing to impede the light of the sun, which is at all times present, whether the sun be below or above the horizon. As to heat from the sun, we do not know it in our world at all. We have one invariable temperature, and one invariable universally-diffused light. Although, therefore, there is no night, yet light is excluded by material obstructions, and, of course there is darkness in such places ; but, since spirits have higher senses than you, their vision is not affected by the absence of light. The sun, moon, and stars are visible to us, and rise and set in

the same way. The subject of the physical laws which appertain to the spirit world is one which you cannot understand, because our matter and your matter are so very different in their nature. It is not, therefore, worth while to follow up this part of the subject further. We prefer to confine ourselves to the spirit, and his mode and conditions of life on the earth plane, and leave others to deal with physical laws, our *forte* being the moral laws.

You are not very clear as to the mode in which spirits communicate with one another, and how they move about from place to place, and the respective powers of locomotion possessed by higher and lower spirits. Spirits on the earth plane converse by their tongues, the same as you do. Even with you, however, persons intuitively learn to communicate by spiritual means more or less—that is to say, by mental sympathy. You understand one another better, and require less talking, in proportion to the amount of mental sympathy which exists between yourselves and your friends; thus a man who has been on such sympathetic terms in earth-life with a friend, will readily communicate with him in the spirit world without the use of his tongue. If spirits are sufficiently developed to rise above the earth plane, they communicate with one another in this way. The general mass of spirits on the earth plane, unless they come there as visitors from the higher spheres, communicate with one another by word of mouth and gesticulation.

Another peculiarity in the relative powers of the

higher and lower spirits, which we have already alluded to, is that the higher spirits are not visible to those below them ; whilst the former have the power to see all the spirits on the earth plane. The latter, therefore, are ignorant of the others' presence, unless it is desired to make them aware of the fact. Hence, at *séances*, it often happens that spirits are present who are unknown to one another, and can only be aware of each other's presence by listening to the communications given through your mediums. An earthly spirit is not aware how many higher spirits are present, and you are not aware how many earthly spirits are present, so that you see the latter have a similar advantage over you to what we have over them. People in the habit of communicating with earthly spirits through those mediums, with whom only spirits of this class are connected, wonder why they only receive messages from strangers, never from their own relations. If the latter are in the Summerland, or the third sphere, of course, it is easily intelligible ; for we must explain to you, that spirits from a higher sphere can only communicate with you *through a medium who has reached the same degree of development as themselves*. Thus, you see, that if you wish to communicate with the higher spirits, you must first place yourself on a spiritual level with them, otherwise you will never get messages from any spirits above the earth plane. Another great law of spirit communion is, that the higher spirits can read the thoughts of the lower ones—each sphere, in fact, comprehending the one below it. We do not call the

earth plane a higher sphere than your world ; it all depends on the degree of development of the spirit, whether embodied or disembodied. If your spiritual development qualifies you to rank with the spirits from the third sphere, your thoughts are not even cognisable to spirits in the Summer-land (the second sphere), much less to those on the earth plane. You see, therefore, the importance of keeping your thoughts pure, and cultivating your own spiritual development. *By this means you raise yourself higher and higher above the temptation of earthly spirits, who, being unable to comprehend you, are incapable of tempting you.* We do not mean to say that you cannot fall, but you are less likely to do so. You may be *indirectly* tempted by low spirits through the agency of bad men and women in the flesh, but they are less powerful for evil than disembodied spirits who come upon you unawares, and may always be with you suggesting evil thoughts and exciting your passions. Spirits who have once progressed above the earth plane never fall.

Since we can read the thoughts of spirits on the earth plane, and hear them speak, besides being obliged to listen to your spoken and unspoken utterances, you can easily imagine that, in your crowded thoroughfares and places of resort, the Babel of tongues, intermixed with the other noises that meet the ear, and are alike audible to us as to you, make a combination of sounds that is not at all attractive. The sounds from the spirit side of life are often a mixture of oaths, shouts, and uproar, which are pain-

ful to listen to, for the disturbances that take place between the unhappy men and women who throng your courts and alleys, and minor thoroughfares—unheard by mortal ear—are at times perfectly demoniacal.

One great difference between your world and ours on the earth plane is, that here there is no governing body to preserve order. With us, perfect liberty reigns triumphant, and no laws are known but the laws of Nature, and those who transgress these soon find out that they must suffer. They are also subject to some degree of influence from the power which higher spirits are able to bring to bear on them; and they are, of course, also held in restraint by the mighty influence of prayer, which operates like a great spiritual police force, keeping them from injuring those who make appeal to it; but, with these exceptions, it is "every man for himself," and you can easily imagine the result. "Might is right" in the spirit world; and if it were not that men have much greater powers of self-preservation as regards their bodies in the spirit world than they have with you, there would be a much worse condition of affairs. As it is, in some respects, it is worse than on earth, but in others it is better. A man has more license and liberty here in regard to *himself* than with you; but he has less power to injure *others*, owing to the fact that he is not accountable to any one but his own conscience for what he does with himself. This *should* be all that is necessary either in your world or in ours, since a man who only does good merely to please others, and not to please his own conscience, is a hypocrite.

In the spirit world on the earth plane we have no police, no laws, no public opinion, no nations, and no public institutions of any kind. All is open and free to every one—in fact, the spirit side of your life resembles life in a city of the dead, or a town besieged, where people do just what they like, and it is merely *sauve qui peut*. Paris, in a state of revolution, might convey some idea of the spirit life in your great cities. Of course, for some men the life they there lead may have attractions, that seem at first glance superior to the life they led on earth. Paupers and criminals have everything to gain by the change from one world to the other. They have nothing to lose, and they leave nothing behind to regret; on the contrary, it would be a happy release for most of them to be free from the necessity of supplying the needs of the body, had they not to supply the needs of the spirit instead. Most of them have never given a thought to their spiritual welfare whilst on earth, and, as a consequence, they have to begin at the bottom of the ladder. In regard to material pleasures, such as appertain to the material body, they are much better off; but, in regard to spiritual possessions, they are paupers indeed. Their great object, therefore, is to associate themselves with persons in the flesh, and enjoy over again, by sympathy, the pleasures appertaining to the material body, without its penalties. Having lost their own material bodies, they use the bodies of others still in the flesh, and incite the latter to all kinds of drunkenness and excess, so that they may gratify their own base desires. In your life the

principal aim is to supply the wants of the physical body, which helps to build up the spirit body within. In our world, the principal object should be to develop the soul that dwells in the *spirit body*; for the latter is not the spiritual man, any more than *your* body is such.

In your world, you spend the greater part of your time in supplying yourselves with food, and other bodily wants, but that is not the sole object of life on earth, though it is the primary one, no doubt; for, if the needs of the body are neglected, the result is that you come into the spirit world with a poorly developed spirit body, and this must first be developed in our world, before the soul within can begin to grow; hence, to neglect your body is to impoverish your spirit. You cannot understand this exactly, for you have many men on earth who have poor bodies but fine heads, or large mental power. This does not prove that their spirit bodies are insufficiently developed, for the material body may be very poorly developed, and yet the spirit body may have attained its full growth. On the other hand, a man may have a splendid *physique*, and yet his spirit body may be very undeveloped. This is owing to the fact that the spirit body partakes both of the mental and bodily food, which you imbibe, and you should endeavour not to develop the mind at the expense of the body, but let both progress at the same rate. Of course, it follows that if there had been a spiritual counterpart to the physical body, there must be a spiritual counterpart to the food which you eat, and this latter enters the spirit body in the same way that the physical

body is fed by the material food. You imagine that this proves that we are wrong in saying the spirit body is fed by the mind, and not by the material body. There is this difference : that whereas the material food you take into your bodies is needed to replace waste of the physical structure, the spiritual counterpart of the body imbibes the food for the purpose of preventing the waste of spiritual matter. Your spiritual body would waste away just as your material body would, if you did not replace the waste by the food which the physical organism absorbs, and of which the spiritual body receives its counterpart. Thus, you see, the spiritual body is precisely analogous to the physical body, so long as the two are conjoined. It is only when they become separated by death that the former is able to live independently. When we say that the mind builds up the spirit body, we mean that the mind supplies the food which is required by the soul that dwells in the spirit body. The soul shows its state of development by the condition of the spirit body, but only in the sense in which we before explained, and which you cannot readily understand, because of the different conditions of life with you and with us. The spirit body is at once fed through the material body, and clothed by the soul. The soul's condition is seen by higher spirits, and the spirit body by the lower, or earthly ones. To the latter, the spirit body may, as already explained, appear to be fully developed ; whilst, to the higher ones, the spirit body may, by reason of the soul's non-development, appear to be half-starved.

We said that a man with you may have a diminutive body, and a well developed spirit body, if his brain is well-developed ; but this does not disprove our theory, because his physical body may have grown as far as the capacity for its development will permit. It does not follow because a man is small and insignificant in your world that his personal appearance as a spirit will correspond ; for the *mind* is the index to the man, not the *body* ; and if his mind is pure and beautiful, so will the spirit be also, and yet he will not lose his personal identity in the next life, since the growth of the spiritual body depends not only on the matter of which the earthly body is composed, but upon the mind also.

You think that the spirit body will not be recognisable by persons who knew only the outward form of the individual on earth, and were not acquainted with his mind, but this is a mistake, for it is not his brain-power that stamps the man as a spirit, but his character—in other words, the *quality* of his soul, whether good or evil. He may be as able-minded as you like—that will not help to build up his spirit body ; it is the amount of *love* in his composition, not the amount of mere knowledge he possesses, which helps to form the spirit body—though love should be based on knowledge, if it is to be properly directed. When that is the case, knowledge becomes wisdom. You have misunderstood us, therefore, if you suppose we allude to the advantage of intellectual cultivation when we advise the development of the mind, as well as the body ; we mean the cultivation of the *love*

element in the soul which requires knowledge as a foundation, for love is only another form of knowledge. You love that which is true and good and pure, and surely that implies a knowledge, or appreciation, of the objects of your love. A man may love that which is base, but that implies an ignorance of truth.

The suppression of selfishness, which is the one great vice of the present age, to which all other evils are more or less traceable, is the first step towards the cultivation of the love element. It is the one thing Christ came into the world to teach, and, after eighteen centuries of Christianity, it is the one lesson that needs still to be learned.

There is not much fear of the spirit becoming too much developed on earth life; for the needs of the body, even with the rich, are such as to absorb more time than most people have to spare for other pursuits. You all require, each day, a certain amount of sleep, walking exercise, and eating, and this leaves little enough time for improving the mind, even with those who have not to earn their livelihoods. Mental culture is a necessary duty even with the rich, in order that men may hold their own in the world. After all these claims on your time, there is not much left for doing good, which is the only way we know of for developing the spirit. You think that we mean actively doing good. No; that is one of the mistakes which many people make on earth. You may do good by simply cultivating benevolent feelings towards your neighbours, if you cannot aid them actively; just

as certainly as you may do harm by entertaining malicious feelings towards them.

It is difficult for you to understand how you can benefit another person by your thoughts, but it is so ; and if you see a beggar in the street, and feel kindly towards him, you do him more good spiritually, than if you gave him money. This is because your thoughts are more powerful in the spirit world than your physical acts are in yours—that is to say, you cannot think intently of anybody without doing so in connection with the will. You feel that you would like to do them good, or that you would like to see them punished, and they are benefited or injured more or less by it, because the will is the great motive power in the spirit world, and the means by which all matter and spirit are there controlled. It is true that a spirit uses his hands occasionally, but it is unnecessary, his will power is sufficient. If he wills the door—that is, the *spiritual* counterpart of your door—to open, it will open for him, and the same with other things. Should he will that harm should come to another man, he puts in motion spiritual forces, which affect more or less the person he thinks of. We do not wish you to suppose it is a power which all persons in the spirit world possess, as that would be the means of causing innocent persons to suffer for the gratification of the malevolent. It is the exception rather than the rule, for any one to be injured by the will of another person ; because the former has a will as well as the latter, and this acts as a shield or resisting power. It is for this reason that persons with firm

wills get on the best in the world, because, even with you, there is after all more spiritual force exercised than physical force. If it were not so, the masses, who are the most powerful (muscularly), would rule the weaker. Thus the man who can best resist, and is least sensitive to the injurious thoughts of others, fights his way most easily to the front—in other words, it is the *positive-minded men* who get on in the world and make the most noise. If a great man has not a firm will, he is sure to suffer, because he cannot fail to make enemies, and his sensitiveness would render him liable to be constantly hurt.

You think that a bad man might, according to our theories, injure another, whether the latter has injured him or not; but that is not the case, since the malevolent individual is subject to the counteracting influence of other spirits, who are able to protect the person intended to be affected by them.

This is owing to the fact that all persons are more or less *en rapport* with the spirit world; and their spirit friends know more of the thoughts that are directed against them than they do themselves. For instance: if any one thinks ill of you, it immediately causes a ray of light to pass from them to you, and your spirit friends can tell by the colour of that ray whether the thought is evil or good. This light is not visible to all spirits. It depends on their state of development. All spirits above the earth plane can thus see the thoughts of persons below them, whether in the body or out of the body. They are not affected by the condition of the atmosphere like

an electric current, nor is there any necessity for wires as a means of conveying the thought. All thoughts are thus conveyed by a ray of light when persons think of one another. This is only in accordance with the law we have mentioned, whereby spirits are able to interpret the thoughts of those who are in a lower plane of spiritual development than themselves. If spirits on their own level, embodied or disembodied, think of *them*, they are aware of it; but thoughts not directed towards themselves, they cannot, in that case, interpret, excepting there be a strong tie of sympathy between them and the thinker. A person in the body may, of course, be spiritually on a higher plane than many disembodied spirits; in which case the latter are unable to read his thoughts, or enjoy his society, though they would, nevertheless, be able to overhear his conversation and spoken words. Hence, if you wish to avoid evil associates from the spirit world, you see how important it is to make spiritual progress, and thereby attract higher spirit friends. Thus, as already explained, if a man enters the spirit world, he is at once aware what people think of *him*, though he is not aware what those same people are thinking of others, and, consequently, he cannot find any consolation in the reflection, that there are other people who are as ill-thought of as himself. Every one he meets thinks badly of him, because they know him to be a bad man by his personal appearance. His spiritual body and garments pronounce his true character, and they think of him accordingly. If he could read the thoughts of his neighbours

regarding others, it would take away the sting of their reproaches regarding himself; for the same reason that a man on earth, if abused by the public as an individual, feels it much more than if he were only abused as one of a number of other delinquents.

You want to know how it is that this ray of thought can benefit or injure the person it is directed towards. If it be a good thought, it benefits him by bringing him into *rapprochement* with the thinker, who may be a good man, and by this means he is benefited. You are still unable to understand why or how this is, and we cannot explain it to you, as you have nothing on earth that is analogous to it excepting the pleasurable feeling which a man experiences when he hears himself praised, or receives a kind word from a friend, or a kind letter. These are the *spiritual* benefits; and so you will, I think, admit that they must more or less benefit the bodily health of the recipient by raising his hope and his confidence in himself—in other words, his self-satisfaction, which is only another name for the approval of his conscience. You think that, according to this, conscience must be a very indefinite standard of right and wrong, since many very unworthy specimens of mankind are supremely satisfied with themselves. This is so, no doubt; and it arises from the fact, that conscience is merely each man's standard of right and wrong. Though there is a certain uniformity in men's notions of right and wrong, yet some conceive to be right what others would very much question. The former's conscience is more easily satisfied than the latter's. Practically, each

attains the same end, viz., the satisfaction of his conscience. It does not, however, follow that either of them will attain happiness, because both may have erroneous standards of right and wrong. One man conceives it right to burn a heretic, and his conscience may approve of his act. This shows that each man's standard of right and wrong is the measure of his wisdom—in other words, his spiritual development.

To return to the subject of the thoughts, you can readily understand, therefore, how, in a world where *all* forces are spiritual, benevolent thoughts may much more clearly confer a real benefit on the recipient. In the same way a person, with you, feels hurt and annoyed when he is the subject of hard words or abuse from any of his acquaintances on earth. If he has not deserved them, he simply closes his power of receiving the insults, so to speak, by assuming an air of indifference, and the shafts of his enemies fall from him without injuring him. This is the nearest example, in your world, of an injury or benefit conferred by a thought that we can give; and I need hardly tell you that the mental annoyance which any ill-feeling engenders in the recipient not unfrequently produces a palpably injurious effect on his bodily health, resulting even in death, in the case of a very sensitive nature; thus proving that, even with you, a spiritual injury may produce material effects.

These rays of light continue to be visible to the higher spirits as long as the thought exists in the mind of the thinker. When his thoughts are directed elsewhere the injury ceases, though its effects, of

course, do not. It is liable to be repeated as long as the person from whence it emanated feels any ill-will towards the individual affected by it. You see from this how it is that spirits can never be happy until they have obtained the forgiveness of those they have injured. If the evil thought is *undeserved* it does the recipient no harm, for he can close his powers of perception of the injury.

We will now allude to the disposition of the person from whom the thought emanates. If he is mistaken he must suffer the consequences of his mistake, until he gets more enlightenment. It is his duty, before he allows an evil thought against another to gain admission into his mind, to make sure that it is a just one. If he does not, he is the wrong-doer and not the other; and he must suffer the consequences of his wrong-doing. The harbouring of evil thoughts is an offence that brings its own punishment, for it prevents the thinker from rising in the spirit world. He must first purify himself from all ill-will towards others; otherwise he cannot know what it is to *love* his fellow-men, and, without that love in his heart, he cannot rise. If he is simply indifferent to his fellow-men—as you suggest he may be—then he is selfish, and that prevents a man rising, quite as much as the other offence against the golden rule.

We will now go back to the question of the difficulties which a spirit has to encounter in his progress after death. We have said that there is no law or order in the spirit world on the earth plane, and that it is “every man for himself.” You will understand,

from this, that it must be much more difficult for a man to rise who depends on the guidance and example of others. How many thousands of men and women are there not in the world who are like mere children, in regard to their ability to take care of themselves. They have never been accustomed to think for themselves, but have always had a friend or relative to depend on, who has perhaps had great difficulty in keeping them out of mischief. This friend or relative may have done this, not from love, but from motives of policy or self-interest. The latter is much more frequently the motive than not, for you do not often find men sacrificing themselves for the sake of benefiting others, unless there be a private motive behind the scenes. If it be a relative they are seeking to save,—say, from drink—the motive may be simply to save themselves the annoyance which would result from his weakness being known to the world. If it be a poor man who is the object of some one's charity, the motive too often is to save one's self the pain which the sight of suffering gives to most people; just as it is disagreeable for them to look at a bleeding wound. When you come to enquire into the number of people who really care to do good in the world from a love for mankind, we find them few and far between. Many persons who are regarded by the world at large as the most charitable of men, and have monuments erected to their memories, are really selfish and ambitious. They wish to trumpet their own goodness abroad, and to be esteemed by their fellow-men; or perhaps they have a superstitious

dread of the penalties in store for them in the next world, if they do not condone their offences in this life by charitable donations. Hence they build churches and endow hospitals. Even here, however, their selfishness crops out in another form, for they are careful not to part with their wealth until they themselves have no further use for it; consequently they disappoint their relations, and dispose of their money by will, instead of giving it away in their lifetimes.

If you look around you will see that we do not exaggerate when we say that not one in a thousand goes out of his way to do good; and of these, by far the larger proportion is to be found amongst the poor and not amongst the rich. The former have no motive to serve, in helping their neighbours, but the sympathy which they feel for those who have to suffer like themselves. Thus, you see, there are more good men amongst the poor than amongst the rich; and intellectual acquirements will not aid a man in his spiritual progress; for a man who has none of the love of his fellow-men in his heart—be his intellect what it may—cannot rise so rapidly in the spirit world as he who, having less intellect, has more of the *love* element in his composition. This explains how it is that a man may be very clever, and yet not make any progress in the spirit world; and there are therefore many very clever men indeed on the spiritual earth plane. You would scarcely think clever men would be such fools as to dwell on the earth plane, with all its drawbacks, such as we have described, when they can enjoy the glorious scenery and society of the

Summer-land—the spirit sphere next above the earth plane—to which all men who are qualified to leave the earth may rise if they choose. There are, however, many attractions, even on the earth plane, for men of intellect. Take, for instance, the wonders of creation; for, as we have already stated, we see an exact counterpart, solid and material to our senses, of all that exists on your globe. This being so, you can understand that a man, fond of travel and adventure, can spend many years very enjoyably on the earth, in his favourite pursuits, without feeling the time hang heavily on his hands. He can visit the most attractive parts of the world, and explore all that is on the earth and under the earth and in the waters on the earth, and even in the sky above the earth; so you see, he has immense scope for his researches, and can accumulate stores of knowledge which may be of benefit to his fellow-men some day when the means of communication between the two worlds are more fully opened up. You cannot understand how this proves the truth of our statement that an intellectual man cannot be happy. We will tell you. The pursuit of knowledge is an occupation; and, as we have already told you, as long as a man has an occupation he is more or less happy. If he studies the beauties of nature as an artist, or traveller, or man of science, he feels elevated and benefited, and may be tolerably happy for the time being; but, in the spirit world, life is so long—being eternal—and the means of acquiring knowledge, including the increased facilities of locomotion, are so much greater,

that a man soon exhausts all that there is for him to see. He then feels weary of perpetually going over the same ground again, and he finds that he cannot make any use of the knowledge he has acquired, with such infinite pains, now that he has got it; hence it is not surprising that he becomes unhappy, and longs for fresh scenes and pastures new. This is the turning point in his career. He may have been a very selfish man on earth,—and how many scientific men are not so! In any case he must find a means of imparting his knowledge to the world or he gains nothing by his acquirements; and if he did not seek knowledge for some object of gain to himself—whether ambition or wealth—he must seek it for the good of his fellow-men, which is simply supposing him to be possessed of the love of his kind that, as already explained, would qualify him to rise higher. If his object has been a selfish one, which is also too frequently the case, he is unhappy because he cannot give his knowledge to the world, and get the credit of it. He tries, perhaps, as a spirit, to get an audience together to instruct them, but fails; because spirits on the earth plane do not care about acquiring knowledge at second hand. If they have any thirst for knowledge, they can all acquire it for themselves; for the thirst for knowledge implies a will to have it, and that gives them the power to get it. This being the case, the scientific men are disappointed of the honour they expected to derive from their discoveries, and they hunt out a medium, and try to impart it through him to your world; but that outlet for their overcharged brains fails to satisfy

their ambition likewise, since it is the *medium* who gets the credit of anything that is so given to your sceptical world. His medium need not be a professional, or even be conscious of possessing mediumship—he may be simply an ordinary scientific man, who is sufficiently impressionable to receive the thoughts which the spirit impresses on his brain, in which case, of course, he takes all the credit of the discovery himself, and, indeed, never finds out until he gets into the next world that all the ideas which he thought were his own, simply came through his mind as a channel for the communication to the material world, of the ideas from another man, who perhaps lived his earth life a few years before himself. Thus, you see, a man may spend years in pursuing his favourite studies in the spirit world, and find after all that it is mere “vanity and vexation of spirit.”

We will now trace the career of a man whose pursuits are of a more intellectual and less scientific turn. He has, perhaps, been devoting his lifetime to the study of metaphysical problems of no practical benefit to his fellow-men ; he merely engages in his studies as an intellectual amusement, perhaps from similar motives to those which actuated our scientific friend, or, perhaps, for the sake of giving to humanity a system of philosophy, which will hand down to posterity his name as a philosopher and learned scholar. Many men have thus devoted a lifetime to metaphysical hair-splitting, under the delusion that they were conferring a benefit on mankind, which however they find out, when it is too late, proves to be a mare's nest. They

have discovered, in fact, after all their labours, mankind is left in precisely the same position regarding the subjects in question as they were before. Of what avail, then, is it to a man's spiritual powers to be able to prove that matter has no existence but is merely subjective? When he enters the spirit world he sees how childish it is to argue about the nature of matter, when even the most profound thinkers of the past are still unable to arrive at its origin and constituents. Let him consider the nature and laws of his own body, and he will have enough to grapple with, without endeavouring to solve the question of the origin of the matter composing it.

When a man tries to solve questions of this nature from a materialistic standpoint, he is simply walking in a circle, and can never arrive at any point excepting the point he started from ; hence the folly of such pursuits, and the dissatisfaction and unhappiness which such men feel on entering the spirit world, and finding that the merest tyro in spiritual knowledge knows more than they do about the subject that has racked their brains during a whole lifetime. No doubt the mental power of such a man may be very great, but it cannot aid him in rising in the spirit world, for he has probably never spent an hour of his life in developing the spirit within him. He has, in fact, been a mere machine, grinding away at one practical pursuit all his lifetime, and is not, from our standpoint, in any way distinguishable, as regards his spiritual development, from the man whose thoughts and occupations through life have been centred on some

mechanical drudgery, or the mercenary pursuit of wealth. We may, therefore, place him in the same category as the man of business, whose thoughts have been of the earth earthy. Each has acquired a certain amount of mental training in the pursuit of his favourite calling, but each is equally deficient in the training that will be of most service to him in the pursuit of happiness in the next life—aye, and in this life, too; for what holds good for one world applies equally to the other. We would not have you neglect your intellectual training, but we would have you understand that, although it may afford you plenty of occupation and pleasure, it cannot give you the happiness which springs from a consciousness of having done some good in the world. We shall have something more to say, by and by, about the best mode of attaining happiness in your life; at present, our attention must be devoted to the practical results in the next life from pursuing particular modes in this. We may take the case of a clergyman—a divine, let us say—who has devoted his lifetime to the study of scriptural authorities, to prove the truth or falsehood of some particular form of religious belief. He may think that his vocation is particularly qualified to enhance his happiness in the next life; but, alas! he, too, finds that it is all “vanity and vexation of spirit.” He is not much better, as regards the results of his life’s labours, than the man who has spent his time in any mechanical pursuit or study. There is not one whit more spiritual benefit to be derived from the study of scriptural lore than from the study of

historical lore. We are aware that this will shock some people who imagine that the Bible is the Word of God, and that the study of its pages, and the authorities it is based upon, must necessarily be pleasing to the Almighty. How mistaken are those who think thus! If biblical studies helped a man to rise in the spirit world, we should expect to find popes and cardinals at the highest pinnacle of spiritual advancement, whereas we find that many men who on earth were scoffers at religion—that is, the religion which had been “established” by man, in place of the religion which God has implanted in the human heart—have attained to a degree of spiritual advancement that would surprise their former detractors. We are aware that our mere authority on these matters is no proof to you. You cannot be expected to believe, on our authority, that some great atheist we could name, is now far more spiritually advanced than many of the bishops and clergy of the Established Church, but such is the fact, nevertheless. We do not like to give names, because if our statement is true—and supposing that what we have told you about the nature of the life led by the spirits on the earth plane is correct—you must by this time be able to understand that such persons are likely to be just as sensitive of exposure and ridicule as you are. They are living in your midst, though you see them not; and they are cognisant of all that takes place on the earth plane in both worlds—the material and the spiritual; and they would resent being made the individual subjects of our remarks, just as much now as they would have

done in their earth lives. This applies not only to spirits on the earth plane, but to spirits in the higher life; and we could give one or two instances, were it advisable, in which spirits from these higher spheres have suffered much agony of mind in consequence of the vile slanders that persons on the earth plane have thought fit to publish against them. We would name one in particular that we happen to be personally acquainted with, and that is the late Lord Byron, who was called down to earth to live over again the sorrow and agony which he formerly endured, through the malicious insinuations of his wife's friends. He has suffered much from folly of this kind, and we do not wish to be the means of inflicting a like sorrow on others. We may tell you more by and by about this subject, and the needless sufferings which you on earth inflict upon those that are gone from amongst you, by publishing memoirs of, and scurrilous libels about them, after their earthly careers are *supposed* to be at an end. Could you but see behind the scenes, and witness the feelings of those whom you think are far removed from the reach of your thoughts, you would be more careful, not only in what you publish abroad, but what you whisper at home.

You will recollect that we said a man of no particular intellectual power, if he had the love of his fellow-men in his heart, whether he ever has had a chance of expressing it or not, will make better progress in the spirit world than one who has much learning but little love in his composition. The former will have plenty of opportunity of exercising his benevolent

faculties in the next world, and the latter, too ; but, in the one case, it will come natural to the possessor ; whilst in the other, it will go against the grain. You go on through life building up habits that tend to impede your progress in the life to come. Thus you may unconsciously cultivate feelings of pride and selfishness, which will have to be surmounted in the next life ; and we need hardly remind you how exceedingly difficult it is to subdue feelings and change habits of thought that have been fed by a lifetime of indulgence. "It is easier for a camel to enter the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven," is an expression that illustrates this familiar truth most forcibly ; for it is chiefly, if not altogether, through riches that a man is encouraged to form these habits that are his curse in the after life. If a man is poor, he has very little outlet for his pride and his selfishness. It is true he may form selfish habits, and make himself disagreeable to all around him, but they are much more independent of him, than those who surround the rich are of *them*. Consequently, in the one case, the delinquent is snubbed and ostracised by his acquaintances ; whilst the latter perceives no signs of disapproval. Hence, wealth is a curse to nine men out of ten ; and, unless a man has had a severe early training—such as will break him off all bad habits of this kind, and make him proof against the temptations of wealth, he had better have had a millstone hung round his neck and be thrown into the sea, than become the inheritor of a large fortune, if he values his happiness in the spirit world. We have no hesitation

in saying that wealth is the greatest curse of this country, because it is the cause of all the vices and crimes that disgrace the land. The universal scramble for wealth, and desire to be rich at any price, is the stimulus to all vicious excitement, and induces the desire for idleness and display, which begets intemperance, crime, and misery, amongst the poor as well as the rich. The latter lose in time the wealth which was theirs, and their descendants sink again in the social scale, until they become the hewers of wood and drawers of water to those who were servants to their ancestors. Thus the wheel of fortune goes round and round, and no one is the happier for it all.

We have now described the career of the rich man, the man of science, and the mere scholar. Let us glance at the politician and see how far he solves the problem—how to be happy. He begins life with an ambition to be a great statesman, and leave a name to posterity. Perhaps he succeeds; but, if so, what advantage will it be to him if his motive has been a selfish one? No statesman can be happy in surveying his life on earth unless he has the consciousness of having worked for the public good, like the old Athenians, who, in this respect, were many of them more spiritually enlightened than are some of our "Reverend Fathers in God" now-a-days. They did not care for the loaves and fishes of political and social distinction, but offered up life, health, and fame at the shrine of patriotism. How few of your popular statesmen and Members of Parliament can say the same! Need you wonder that they too are to be

found among the selfish and ambitious who still linger on the earth plane, failing to attain there the happiness they were equally unsuccessful in finding in their embodied state. As to kings, queens, and aristocrats, we have no need to waste much time upon them; for, although many of them—like the late Prince Consort and your present Queen—are superior to the ordinary race of men and women one meets in the world, too many of them are found amongst the vilest of the vile. Theirs is a hard fate indeed—from a spiritual point of view. To be flattered and worshipped in one world, and kicked and despised in the next, is surely a bitter lot. That, however, is what they *must*, in the nature of things, experience; for what man, unless he *be* “formed indeed of the stuff that kings are made of,” can be expected to lead such a life as most royal personages have to endure, without running great risk of becoming degraded by it?

There is one subject on which we have only indirectly touched, and on which we should like to say a few words, and that is—the punishment of hypocrites. There are so many, conscious and unconscious, hypocrites in the world, that it is difficult to imagine how they all succeed in making themselves heard, for, in point of fact, nearly all the men who do come to the front are of this class. This is a very bold statement, you say; but, nevertheless, we say it without hesitation. To our eyes the true character of all men is patent; that is to say, of all men of the kind we allude to, for we do not profess to be exceptions to the rule we have alluded to—that

spirits see the characters of those beneath them and not those above them. We have divided hypocrites into conscious and unconscious hypocrites, because there are two kinds, namely, those who deceive themselves and those who deceive others. Ignorance causes men to deceive themselves; and ignorance, in another form, causes them to deceive others. In the one case they fancy they are cleverer, or more pious, or more virtuous than they really are; in the other case they do not pretend to deceive themselves, but think that it is advisable to deceive the public. They find so much encouragement in the world, for both kinds of hypocrisy, that the wonder is not so much that they yield to it as that they are not more easily overcome. Everywhere men are invited to join associations, nominally originated for purposes of philanthropy or piety, but really intended to serve the personal interests of a particular set of individuals. You have church defence associations, and charities for the relief of the sick, political associations, and trades' unions, as well as co-operative and temperance organizations and kindred movements, but not many of those who join them do so from disinterested motives. Men rush into distinctions of all kinds with a view to improve their position in the eyes of the world, and they care less about the ways and means than they do about the end to be attained. The best men amongst you are the most modest; the most worthless are the most impudent, and are always pushing themselves to the front. This is one of the characteristics of the age which is very patent to the

spirit world, who can distinguish the genuine from the false; and when we see a country whose principal public men, from the Prime Minister downwards, are shams, we naturally feel how dangerous must be the present and future of that nation. Such is, however, the case in England at the present time [1875], and we fear that, unless a healthy reaction takes place in public feeling, much mischief will ensue to your prosperity as a nation. You cannot realise the immense amount of sham there is in the world, and the small amount of honest talent there is to the front, and in your country above all others; excepting, perhaps, America, where the same vice exists, but in a more hopeful form, since the nation is young, and has not the same responsibilities which England has. In fact, so great has become this evil, in your country, that we very much fear a national calamity is impending, which can only be averted by the display of honest zeal on the part of those in power. Should this amount of honesty not be forthcoming we have great reason to fear that England's future is sealed. Everywhere signs of national decay are visible. You say there are many honest men and much right feeling still left in the country, and in the press, which doubtless could do much to stem the current of national decline. We admit all this; but still those who possess this honesty of purpose cannot make themselves heard. Their countrymen will not listen to them. Indirectly your rulers are the most ignorant, since you have given political power to the rabble; and they, unfortunately, by reason of their ignorance, are unable to discrimi-

nate between the sham and the genuine ; hence men of genuine worth and true patriotism can only stand by and deplore what they see, leaving to others the direction of the nation's future.

Englishmen have ever been proud of their country; but, until the nation learns wisdom by bitter experience, the future which hangs over her head cannot be averted. National decay stares you in the face, and cannot be avoided, save by prompt measures on the part of those in power. They, however, are blinded by self-interest ; patriotism is flung to the winds, and men who could guide the nation's future are left unnoticed. A heavy responsibility rests on those who play the part of Judas, and betray their country's good for gold. In this life they may escape the consequences of their baseness, but a bitter reckoning awaits them in the spirit world, when the scorn and hatred of their fellow-countrymen will be heaped on their heads in place of the honours you bestow upon them in this life ; whilst honest men, like Mr. Plimsoll and John Bright, will merit and receive a future greatness such as few earthly kings ever attain to. You think we speak of grandeur and display. No ; but the honest love and admiration of all mankind ; for the spirit world takes as much interest in your politics as you do, and when such an event occurs as the Plimsoll incident, it creates quite as much sensation with us as with you, and is eagerly canvassed and commented on.

You cannot understand how the spirit world can see through all the shams we speak of and not use

its influence to expose them, either through mediums or impressional persons in the flesh. You forget that the majority of men, in the spirit world, are very like those on earth, and too apathetic to exert their wills to ascertain things that do not concern themselves; consequently they are just as ignorant as men in the flesh. When we say the spirit world knows what goes on behind the scenes, we mean, rather, the more enlightened and unselfish, of whom many are so engaged, and do take an interest in what is going on. Men, who on earth were patriotic and sincere, will still continue to take an interest in political events; and of these we speak. Such as feel inclined, can attend your House of Commons, as many do, and make themselves personally acquainted with what goes on there. They overhear the private remarks of the members, and read their thoughts too, as we have done, and can easily do; since the spiritual advancement of those who represent your nation, in that assembly, is not very great. There are very few who are not actuated by selfish motives, consciously or unconsciously. They love greatness, and care more for personal advancement than the prosperity of the nation; and unless—as in the Primsoill incident—they are roused out of their apathy, by a fear of popular disapproval, they seldom take more than a petty party interest in what goes on. Party feeling is only self-interest in another form. What, then, can become of a nation whose governors consume precious time in squabbles over place and selfish personal ends? No one who reflects on the present position

of your country can view the situation without alarm. A vast territory, a crowd of enemies ready to spring on her when the right moment arrives, and a Government apathetic and indifferent to anything but their own petty interests. Such is the situation in England at the present day; and may it result in a brighter future than we anticipate for it, is our hearty wish.

To revert to our subject. Hypocrites are the men who are mostly responsible for what we describe. As you say, those in the spirit world cannot be deceived by them, because they are men of a low spiritual development, and their shortcomings are therefore well known to us; but meanwhile they are deceiving thousands, or it may be millions, of their fellow-men in the flesh, all of whom will feel personally unfriendly to them in the next life, when death robs them of their mask. The concentration of all these malignant thoughts on one man will cause him pain, grief, and shame, such as no words of ours can describe; and it will be many years before he can regain happiness such as he enjoyed on earth. Not until he has worked off his sins by undoing the evil he did on earth can he regain the respect of his fellow-men. He has not only produced national ruin—which, as you observe, is in the spirit world no great matter, since all men are brothers there—but he has hurried into another life thousands of men and women unprepared, who, but for his bad government, might have been alive and happy. The position of such a statesman in the next life is not one to be envied; nor is that of any

hypocrite, and to this class too many of those whom you honour with place and power belong.

You know how Christ told his hearers to suffer little children to come unto Him, for of such was the kingdom of heaven. This is a saying, the truth of which is nowhere more strikingly illustrated than in the spirit life on the earth plane. There are no spirit children on the earth plane. All that is good and beautiful in life is removed from the gaze of those who live on the earth plane: even dumb animals are no longer the companions of man; for, although your dogs and horses are visible and tangible to us as spirits—that is to say, of course, the *spiritual* counterpart of their bodies is so—yet they, no more than their masters, are aware of our presence, excepting in a few rare instances. Thus, you see, that the life on the earth plane possesses fewer attractions than you might be disposed to imagine, from what has gone before. You imagined that with beautiful scenery to gaze upon, and the birds of the air to listen to, a man might be tolerably happy, even if the dumb animals whom he saw grazing in the meadows did take no notice of him. Try it, and see whether it is so. Imagine yourself deprived of your pet animal, if you are a lover of dogs; or, if you are a sportsman, fancy how you would like to see horses and dogs around you, and not be able to attract the least sign of affection or recognition from them; or, if you care for the animals that adorn the homestead of one of your lovely English farms, how would you like to be in the midst of your favourite companions, and they to

know you not. All the animals you would see would be the property of men in the flesh, and they alone would receive those tributes of affection which these dumb animals offer to their lord and master—man. Again, if you are fond of children, how would you feel happy to live in a world where there were no children? and yet this is precisely what we find in the spirit side of the earth plane. Not only are there no children, but there are no lovely women or young girls to adorn your hearths and homes. Of course, as you observe, there are the maidens and children still in the flesh, who are visible to the spirits on the earth plane; but the latter cannot enjoy their society, seeing that spirits are ignored by them. Thus they have not even the satisfaction they formerly had of being seen, and, perhaps, spoken to by those who, at least, regarded them as fellow-creatures, and bestowed an occasional thought upon them. Now, as spirits, they can only look on as strangers, to what passes in your streets. The presence of good women and lovely children may benefit even the most hardened, whilst they continue to mingle with them as fellow-mortals; but in the after life, there is not even this small satisfaction. Of course, men who care for the society of women and children, must have made some spiritual progress, and would, indeed, be qualified to rise to the Summer-land; whereas, if they have no such spiritual development, they must be content with the society which the earth plane affords.

You think that such persons might intrude themselves upon those whose society they may feel the want of,

whilst the embodied spirit is awake during your sleeping hours. This is not the case, however ; for, although we have no police to protect us, we have nature's laws that are quite as effectual; and we know that those who are unlike repel one another, just as surely as like attracts like. Hence, those who thus sought to intrude upon others would find that their society was shunned, and perhaps that they were regarded with loathing and hatred. Since, therefore, they could not be happy in such society, they would soon quit it. You must understand that the courtesies of life are just as much regarded in the spirit world as with you, and no one would think of intruding upon another in our world any more than in yours.

The society of the earth plane cannot, therefore, offer many attractions to a man of much right feeling; and you need not therefore be surprised that selfishness is the main characteristic of those who dwell on the earth plane, and until they get rid of that flaw in their characters, they cannot rise to the land where women and children and pet animals give scope to the feelings of our better natures.

Shall we tell you what we have witnessed of the agonies that are in store for the selfish? Have we not seen many a mother weeping, and wringing her hands in vain, wandering about the earth plane, seeking eagerly for her infant child, whom kind nature took from her selfish arms to place in better care? Oh could you but see the sorrow and agony which awaits such a woman as the one who—with plenty of love for her home, her child, her husband, and her own

belongings—has never cast a thought on the wants of others, preferring to centre her whole earthly love on herself—for such her love amounts to—few would be anxious to be happy in this life at such a cost in the future. Mothers who do their duty to their own children and their own families, and cast no thought around them, are not qualified to enter the higher life; they must remain below until, like the rest, they have learnt to love *mankind*, and not merely those of them who minister to their love of self. If, therefore, they have lost any children very young, the latter will necessarily be separated from them until the mother's spiritual development brings her to a higher sphere.

We will now describe the sufferings of those who have been disappointed in love, and these include so large a proportion of womankind, that you would be surprised did you but know how few women there are in your world who are satisfied in their married life. This is a delicate subject, we are aware; but it is one that affects the happiness of such a large number of mankind, that we cannot remain silent on it. There are those amongst you who think that marriages are made in heaven; but if they saw what we know of the future life of most of those who have married on earth, they would not desire to be partakers of heavenly bliss at such a cost. You imagine, because the wife does not show to the outer world her inner feelings, that she is necessarily happy. We allude to the upper and middle classes; for you know too well how the wife's resentment of the injuries she suffers is rewarded amongst the lower classes. There, wife-beating and

wife-murder are the order of the day ; but how many wives are there not, amongst the upper and middle classes, who suffer equal barbarities at the hands of *their* lords and masters to any which their poorer sisters have to endure. It is true the form of ill-treatment may not wear the same external aspect as that which the working man's wife endures. The man of business or profession does not punish his wife in the same manner perhaps, but he breaks her heart with his unkindness and selfishness. She suffers more uncomplainingly than the poorer woman ; but the canker is there just the same, and she will, in the end, find that she has not suffered less in spirit than the other. The mere outward display of ill-temper which wives and husbands indulge in, is not the cause of that which we allude to—it is the *effect*. Were love still reigning in their hearts, there could not be any want of harmony. The existence of such discord is *proof conclusive* that there is no longer any love between the husband and wife. There may be a cold, formal friendship, dictated by motives of policy or worse ; but, nevertheless, the fact remains the same—disguise it how they will to meet the eyes of the world—that *they do not love one another*. Such being the case, we say it without fear of contradiction—and let those who doubt us beware of the future they are preparing for themselves—that of all the sins which this world of yours is full of, none equal, in the intensity of the sufferings which await the spirit on our side of the grave, the agonies that are endured by those who have lived inharmoniously as man and wife—a life which is alike

an outrage upon nature and upon delicacy. This may seem rather strong language to those who are unable to see behind the scenes as we do, and witness the consequences in the next world of such an unnatural mode of life.

We may as well explain what we mean more definitely, lest we should be accused of vague denunciations of all marriages; for if such a large proportion of marriages as we have intimated are unhappy, it might be inferred that very few married people had much chance of future happiness. What we refer to are not the petty squabbles, which are incidental to all human relationships, and which may be caused by ill-temper, due to disappointments in business, bad digestion, over excitement, or the multitudinous worries of everyday life, having no connection with matrimonial troubles. These, of course, are not *necessarily* signs of matrimonial inharmony, although, in too many cases, they may be so. Let every man decide this for himself—he knows how far the cause may be the one or the other; but where there are perpetual bickerings and jarrings between husband and wife, running through a course of years, you may depend upon it that the absence of love—which is the only true basis of married life—is only too surely indicated. In all such cases, we unhesitatingly assert that the continuance of cohabitation as husband and wife is a crime against God and man, which must assuredly be atoned for by the *guilty* party—and that is generally the husband—by years of suffering in the spirit world. To the credit of woman be it said, that

she is, in ninety-nine cases out of every hundred, the victim and not the cause of such unnatural relationships; and although there falls on her a share of the dreadful consequences, yet, being the creature of circumstances to a great extent, her case is much more to be pitied than that of the man, who has no excuse for what he knows to be a selfish wrong. In the future life, therefore, the one will receive the pity and the care which her self-sacrifice may deserve; whilst her partner will be compelled to work out the full extent of the sentence which outraged nature inflicts on those who disobey her laws.

We now come to the question of culpability in the other case—where designing women entrap men into marriages that are inharmonious and unnatural. These are crimes which deserve as much condemnation as the other instances we have quoted, where the blame rests on the husband. Even in these cases, however, the latter is responsible for what follows; for, although society compels him to maintain the wife who has been forced upon him, yet the responsibility of continuing to violate nature's laws must lie at his door. Women, alas, soon find out the folly of their conduct; and although they may try to make the best of a bad job, and seek by the distractions of social pleasures to conceal the canker that grows within, yet the fact remains patent, to those who read the inner secrets of the heart, that sorrow and suffering are endured in silence by those who thus sell themselves for a life of worldly ambition. To make "a good match" is, unfortunately, the aim of too

many women in this world. Would to God that they could see what sort of a match they are making for the spiritual life that begins where yours ends! A woman who never marries at all may deplore her lot, but she is (or may be if she chooses) ten times happier than she who thus tempts fortune in the marriage lottery. We are aware that, in touching on this subject, we are dealing with a very weighty topic, and one which we should be glad to enlarge upon to a much greater extent. We must, however, leave this question for a future time. The world is not ripe for all that we could say on this subject. If we have said enough to deter foolish men and women from rushing on a fate which it makes us shudder to contemplate, in some of its results as seen in the spirit world to-day, we shall be thankful. Your social arrangements will require very considerable modification before the reform which we should recommend is likely to be adopted; but we shall at all times be happy to give those who seek more light on this sacred subject any information and advice which our experience may suggest. Society, at present, has made up its mind that marriages which are sanctioned by the Church must be sanctioned by God; and although the Church is inconsistent enough to deny that the faith of those who differ from itself has any saving efficacy, it does not dispute the sanctity of marriages that are solemnized by the ministers or priests of other denominations. This, on the face of it, suggests a looseness in the Divinely sanctioned tie that might at first sight strike us as being surprising. When, however, we find that

Bishops, sitting in the House of Peers, sanction the enactment of laws that still further permit of this Divine tie being loosened, how can we doubt that such a tie, when disapproved of by the inner monitor whom the Creator has Himself placed in our breasts, must certainly be much less inviolable than many interested married people persist in pronouncing it to be? We say *interested* married people, for—to the shame of our sex be it said—woman occupies such a dependent position in the social fabric that her mouth is completely gagged on this question. No married woman in the country *dares* open her mouth, and tell what she, in her innermost soul, thinks on this subject, lest she should be accused of herself being a victim of domestic unhappiness; and how few of them would be prepared to sacrifice house, home, and children for the sake of *principle*. We cannot blame them for this, because the necessities of the body are unfortunately too often, with you, considered superior to those of the soul. Even if they did appreciate the dreadful consequences of such a mode of life, we fear therefore that many of them would prefer to continue it, rather than be turned adrift upon the world, and compelled to support themselves and their children unaided. When women are less dependent on men for support, they will be more ready to raise their voices against this and many other ills that they now bear in silence.

We will now turn to the career of silly girls, who imagine that the main object in life is to be admired, and to make conquests. They form, unfortunately, a very large proportion of the young ladies of the present

day. Taught from their earliest youth to believe that marriage is the natural destiny of all women, they very properly seek to qualify themselves for their future duties; but in what way do they do this? Generally, their notion of qualifying themselves is to learn a few trashy accomplishments, which have the most certain effect of disqualifying them for a life of domestic toil. Hence, when they arrive at a marriageable age, they seek an alliance that shall place them above the necessity of manual labour of all kinds; and, instead of becoming the happy wives of congenial partners, they aim at marrying a man of position, totally regardless of any proper harmony of mind or body. We do not mean to say they marry men they dislike, but the only true qualifications—which are *spiritual* and not physical, mental or social—are entirely overlooked. They ought to consider whether there is a harmonious blending of the two souls; whether there is such a compatibility of tastes, temper, and mode of thought, as to warrant the belief that they are suited to be partners for life. Whether partnerships for life are to be the law of the future, time will show. We have our own opinions on that subject, which are based, not on theories, but on facts; and these all point in one direction. Be that as it may; at present, alliances are made for life. This being so, the enormous importance of such a step ought to be all the more apparent; and, instead of rushing blindly in where angels fear to tread, those who seek matrimonial alliances should, of all things, weigh well what they are about. Far rather would

we see women single, or even "unfortunate," where a timely repentance follows, than see them committed to a false step in married life; for here is no turning back—the fatal step is taken *for life*, and a life-long suffering, to be continued for years in the next life, awaits those who make a false move in this direction.

You very properly object that nine women out of ten are not able to consider such a weighty question as we place before every young girl, just out of her teens. How can she possibly foretell how a man, whom she fancies, may turn out ten years hence? or what the precise amount of harmony may be between them, and how long that harmony may last? You say, that to expect any woman to make such a choice as the world requires of them, at the age they are usually called upon to decide it, is requiring an amount of intellectual acumen and foresight that few men, and still fewer women, possess. As regards the latter, we reply that they are much more qualified to judge of the step they are taking than men are. A woman's heart seldom deceives her, if she will but listen to its voice; but if she stifles the silent monitor within, by considerations of worldly advantage, of course she will make a mistake to be afterwards bitterly repented. A man is far less sensitive to spiritual monitions than a woman, and will be much more likely to commit himself than the latter—providing she refuses to do what *her* inner self requires of her. If she does not choose the right course, of course her lover's chances of finding it are lessened. We are aware of the difficulties which both men and women

have to encounter, and we have but one remedy to offer, or rather one preventive to suggest. You cannot alter the existing state of things; you cannot even bring the right people together and prevent future mistakes of the same kind, because people are not what they seem, and those whom the world may think suitable may, in reality, be most unsuitable. What, then, is to be done? you ask. There is only one course to pursue. If you cannot find your true partner—and society insists that you should make one selection only and abide by it for life—PRAY FOR HELP, and if he or she be with you on earth, a road will be opened up by which you will, in all human probability, find the one who will be suited to make you happy in your present life. It may not be that he or she is your *true* partner. Such unions are very few and far between with you, but a happy marriage may take place between those who are not perfectly mated. We do not believe in the necessity, which some theorists hold, of two persons being in their earthly marriage perfect affinities one for the other. Where it can be the case, so much the better; but it very often happens that your true partner is in the spirit world. What then? Are you to remain single—possessing, perhaps, all the qualities necessary to make a happy husband and father—when thousands who are not so qualified rush into matrimonial relationships that people the world with undesired children? We do not think so. There are thousands of men and women in the world who may be similarly circumstanced, and for all the happiness which an

earthly marriage can afford them, may be admirably adapted to make one another happy ; much more so, in some cases that we know of,—where the partners are not perfectly mated—than ninety-nine man-made marriages out of every hundred. We say, then, Pray for help, and those who require it will assuredly get it.

You wish to know something of the future life of those who have been happily married on earth. We must divide them into two classes:—those who have been truly mated, and those who have not been so, but have been married to partners with whom they have been fairly happy, but not completely so. As regards those who have not been happy enough to come under either of the above classes, we can only say they have lived a life against nature's laws, and have to suffer the natural penalty. All men must ultimately meet their true mates, whether in this life or the next ; just as certainly as all men must be sooner or later saved. This may take centuries of time to accomplish, according as they have lived when in the flesh. An unhappy life in the flesh tends to retard their happiness in the future ; hence those who do not come under the foregoing categories are simply delayed in their happiness, like all other transgressors. Those who have been true to their companions, and have gained their love, have of course nothing to repent of in the next life. If the two partners then find that they were not conjugally as happy as they would like to have been, their relationship in the next world will simply be that of friends, and they may each meet their true companions there and be happy. Marriage, in fact,

does continue in heaven, theologians notwithstanding; and only those who have been truly mated here, can conceive how impossible it would be for a heavenly society to exist without the continued existence and capacity for enjoying the highest love, next to that of God. Of course, those who have not known true love on earth can be excused for not being able to reconcile *their* notion of heaven with the continued existence of earthly marriages. When, however, we speak of marriages in heaven, we mean natural and therefore Divinely sanctioned unions, and not unnatural, church-made marriages. Of the latter, of course, we know nothing in the spirit world, not even on the earth plane. Married life on the earth plane is very often a continuance of the misery of the former life, since many men and women there continue to believe that it is a sin to undo what the church has done; consequently, they at first go on living together, in spite of their unsuitability, simply by force of habit. On the other hand, those who hate one another are repelled, and never see each other again, or desire to do so. For the same reason that there are no pure-minded women and innocent children on the earth plane, so there are no love-marriages, because it is impossible for husband and wife to be firmly attached without being also unselfish and spiritually advanced. When we say firmly attached, we mean of course a love which is of the soul, not of the body. Physical attractions are so often the real causes which hold people together on earth, that pure love may never exist at all; and yet the marriage may be considered a happy one. Such

ties, it is needless to say, do not attract in the spirit world, for the beauty of the spirit body is dependent entirely on the beauty of the mind; hence persons spiritually deformed would not continue to be attractive to their earthly partners, unless the latter were on the same spiritual level, and unable to see any deformities. The subject of married life on the earth plane is one we cannot enter upon without taking up more space than is desirable; suffice it to say that it presents no attractions to men of any spiritual elevation. But true love does continue after death, and finds its home and its highest expression in the Summerland and the higher spheres, where all true lovers must gravitate, if their love be that of the soul, and not that of the body.

Many persons think it is not permissible to pray for worldly objects, but this we consider a popular delusion amongst those on earth. *We* pray for help whenever we want it, let the object be what it may; but not if it is an evil object. In the latter case prayer certainly is undesirable, for it is the cause of attracting to you spirits who will aid you in accomplishing your purpose, perhaps, but they will only increase your unhappiness afterwards; for if you have strong will-power you are tempting *them*. On the other hand, if you pray for a good object you benefit the spirits whom you draw around you. It is good for them to help others; and in helping you, they help themselves. Thus, you see, prayer is a spiritual force which you can put in operation if you have will-power enough. It is not necessary for a man to pray before

he can be helped, but it is advisable; because, although his spirit friends can read his thoughts and understand his wants, he loses the aid of many others who cannot read his thoughts, but who would be attracted to him by his prayers, and would help him if they knew he wanted help. If, however, he never prays they do not know of his needs, and they do not help him. Prayer is therefore something like advertising your wants in the newspapers. All spirits do not see them, it is true; but those who can help you are made aware of your needs, and are able to assist you. You should, of course, pray to God, not to spirits. He permits spirits to execute his decrees. You may not know that this is the case, because you do not see God; but we all live under His laws, and nothing can happen *contrary* to His laws; consequently, whatever is done must be done by the Divine sanction, and to Him your prayers should be addressed. We do not say they would be unanswered if addressed to spirits. You can address your prayers to spirits if you like, but it comes to the same thing. You call on the spirit of God which dwells in their souls—as in yours—to help you, and that spirit responds to your call. There is therefore no disgrace in asking help from spirits. *We* do not pray to spirits but to God.

You have been taught that prayer is a solemn act, and should only be resorted to when there is urgent need for it; on the other hand you are told by other people to pray every day, and you repeat formal prayers which merely represent so much breath wasted, inasmuch as there is no exercise of will-

power, no inspiration, no earnest longing for help, which alone is the *true* prayer. Both these theorists are wrong. You should keep your mind fixed on the course of life you wish to lead, and hope that it may be realised; and if the hopes you entertain are good ones, and you are worthy of their being realised in you, they will inevitably be so, and you will be happy. If, on the contrary, your hopes are mercenary and selfish they may also be realised, because you will call spirits to your aid in the latter case just as certainly as you do in the former; but you will never be happy. Hence you see the importance of living in constant hope, having, in short, your *will* constantly fixed on the goal you have in view, and striving for it. You may not be happy if you achieve it. That will be your own fault in wishing for that which cannot give you happiness, and is therefore wrong to pray for. You should therefore also pray for *true wisdom*, and then you will be guided by wise spirits who will teach you what is good for you and what is not. By this means you will find that prayer is not an exercise of the will, to be fallen back on in extreme cases only, but to be kept constantly in view. By your will you can accomplish all things, and that it may be rightly directed is the first prayer you should breathe. We may mention here that the results of the will-power we allude to, are not confined to the person exercising it. You may confer as great benefits on others by the exercise of your will-power as on yourself. In short, your prayers should not be confined to yourself and your own wants, but to the wants of your friends;

and if any whom you know are in distress which you cannot alleviate, and you are rich in will-power, you may confer on them, at no cost of money to yourself, greater benefits than you could possibly do by all the wealth of the Indies. In short, you may soothe a troubled spirit, as well as be the means of their bodily wants being supplied, which is more than money can do.

The ambition of a worldly man, which causes him to be constantly striving after wealth, is only an instance of prayer or will-power misdirected. We have fewer instances of prayer rightly directed; hence it is that so much misery exists in the world. The men with the strongest wills will be able to do the most good or evil in the world, because they have the most influence with their fellow-men, which is only another name for prayer—the exercise of an influence over others. It does not follow because you are on the earth that you cannot exercise an influence over spirits above your own sphere. That is a mistake; you can exercise your power wherever it is wanted—that is to say, if the object requires the interference of the highest spirits you may get it. We do not say you *will* get it, for, of course, you might pray for impossible things, and we do not say you will always get what you want in the time that you wish it. You might wish for the conversion of the whole of the spirit world on the earth plane; but this prayer could not be granted without the aid of the Almighty, and therefore you would have to be subject to laws that would necessitate your waiting His time.

You are not quite clear about the extent of power

which a man may exercise through prayer. It depends entirely on the amount of will-power he has. If he be a man who is born to command, he will be able to exercise great influence in the spirit-world, as well as in your world. This was the secret of Napoleon's successes. He could bring to his aid immense numbers of spirits by reason of his will-power. We do not mean to say he prayed for help from spirits; but his aspirations for conquest and victory attracted towards him those who could aid him to succeed, and he invariably did succeed, until he met a man with a stronger will than his own. This is the reason why the English troops are so often victorious. They are determined men; and, as such, they exercise more will-power than their opponents frequently do, and their spirit friends fight their battles for them by every means in their power. They are supported by what we might call armies of Englishmen from the spirit world, who flock round them, eager for the fray, and ready to support them in the hour of danger. Of course, their opponents are also aided by their friends, who hate the spirits on your side, and thus the earthly foemen are aided by rival foemen in the spirit world. This is always the case in great wars, and was especially so in the last German war, when the Germans called to their aid their compatriots from the spirit world, who were the real means by which the enemies of their country were confounded. This sounds like a digression from the subject of prayer, but it is not so, for the one power pervades both the civil and the military operations of a nation—namely, the power

of will; and the nation, whose principal citizens set their hearts on being rich, will speedily make themselves a wealthy people by reason of the aid they derive from their spirit friends. All this implies, of course, the existence of great will-power as a national characteristic; and if, in course of time, that will-power is not sustained in a true path, such aid falls off, because the spirit friends who have assisted them in their good work, get tired of rendering help to unworthy objects, and withdraw from a people who are the cause of unhappiness to themselves and their spirit friends. You cannot understand all this, so we must try to explain. You imagine that the presence of will-power implies the possibility of calling in the aid of spirit power, and its absence would necessarily show that spirits could not render the required aid; since, if will-power be, as we said, the one thing needful, then, as long as the will-power lasted, the spirit power would be forthcoming. You do not therefore see, how the spirits could voluntarily withdraw their aid in the way we state. This is owing to the fact that you overlook the relation between spirits and men. The former are not the servants of the latter, and we never intended you to understand it in that sense. They are merely free-agents in the matter. As we told you, spirits on the earth plane—being those who most interfere in the affairs of the nation and in the material prosperity of their friends—do so, simply because, in the first place, they require something to do: they must be occupied; and, secondly, they may want to do good, and they may

be so influenced by the minds of those who call in their aid as to believe that the cause they are asked to espouse is a good one. Hence, you see they may be mistaken, and give their aid to a bad cause, like the poor French soldiers who fought so valiantly to defend the throne of an unworthy Emperor. They and their spirit friends imagined they were fighting for the honour and glory of France, and they did all they could to accomplish their object. It does not follow, therefore, because spirits render aid, that they are doing good. They may be mistaken, just the same as you on earth are, and it may be generations before they find out that they are not doing good. When, however, the time does come, of course, they will withdraw their aid from a bad cause. This brings us once more to the fact that will-power is the great lever by which men accomplish that which they long for.

By *longing* we do not mean praying—that is another matter. Prayer is a more *active* form of longing, and what we say is, that if you pray—that is, if you *ask* for what you want—(not necessarily aloud); you have a better chance of getting it than by keeping your longings to yourself, and never expressing them in the form of words. This expression of a longing, in the form of words, addressed to some friend—your Almighty Father it should be—is what we understand by prayer. You think that a man like Napoleon I is not likely ever to have prayed in his life for help to aid him in carrying out his plans. We happen to know for a fact that he did, and that is just why he

got such an immense number of adherents around him from the spirit world. He prayed constantly, not perhaps aloud. He may not even have *intended* to pray; but the mere mental utterance of a desire that he might succeed is, to all intents and purposes, a prayer, and a man who constantly and actively wishes for success has a far better probability of success than one who merely trusts passively to *chance*. We have now given you an outline of a very important subject, whose ramifications would fill a volume. In fact, every phase of life is intimately blended with the question of prayer, or will-power; which latter is the one great motive power in the universe.

We have told you of the power of prayer. Now, let us turn to the power of love. The one is the counterpart of the other. Prayer asks, and love grants. If you pray for that which you need, the measure of the love which you are entitled to, at the hands of Him you pray to, is evidenced by the response you get to your prayer, be the response favourable or otherwise. If you pray to a human being, the same law applies. If he loves you much, he will respond readily; if not, he refuses. Thus you see that the law is very simple in its application; and, in proportion, as you merit a reward, so will that reward be meted out to you. You see this law in operation in every phase of life, both in the spiritual and the material worlds. With you its application is of daily occurrence. You refuse the request of your child, not because you don't love it, but because you do. This

may seem a contradiction in terms, but it is applicable to the highest relationship between man and his God. You do not grant every wish of your child, because you know that they are not all desirable, and would produce unhappiness if granted. Thus you see it is not love to grant a request in this case, but a real unkindness; in other words, a want of love. We see, from this, that prayer is not so much an act of the will as it is a result of faith, or a consciousness of being cared for by some one who loves us. We feel we are in somebody's charge, and we look to that some one for help; and in proportion as we feel that we deserve it, so do we feel that we shall get it. And when we are satisfied that our deserts merit a certain reward, that reward is certain to follow; however improbable it may appear. This you think rather exaggerated, for, according to that theory, there should not be any unrewarded merit in the world, whereas you know there is a great deal. We admit the apparent inconsistency; but let those who doubt the truth of what we say put it to the test. Let them pray for that only which they feel they deserve. If they do *not* get it, you may depend upon it they have not yet qualified themselves for it, and they had much better pray that they may first be qualified. If they do not know *how* to become qualified, let them pray for light on that subject also, and so on; wherever the difficulty may be, prayer will assuredly be found a satisfactory solution. This being so, it follows that, if you *are* qualified for what you think you merit, you assuredly ought to get it, and so you certainly will;

for let those who think there are many persons in the world whose merits are unrewarded, inquire how much prayer those persons offer up, and we venture to say they will find that they are generally persons of a very sceptical turn of mind, who either confessedly do not believe in the efficacy of prayer, or merely pretend they do so. If you doubt the truth of this statement—which may sound rather startling—try it, and see whether we have not told you substantially what is true. We say substantially; for, as already stated, there are conditions in the case which you are not qualified to judge of. You cannot possibly tell what the qualifications of another man may be, or how far such a reward as he may *seem* to deserve—say wealth, for instance—may be desirable or undesirable for him. There are many poor men who would be cursed if wealth were showered upon them; so are there also others to whom honour would be an affliction. It depends upon each man's particular idiosyncrasies of character how far he might be properly rewarded in the way others imagine him entitled to be rewarded, or he himself may think so.

From what we have said about faith it might be assumed that the person availing himself of his will-power to induce spirits to assist him must necessarily be a believer in spirits, or in a God. How otherwise, say you, could he be said to have faith in any one's guardianship? As we have already told you, a person may unconsciously pray and attract persons to him from the spirit world, of whose existence he may be unaware; so may he also be said to have *faith* in

those spirit friends. He may call it luck, or genius, or destiny, it matters not ; so long as it inspires his confidence or trust. The latter forms the basis of his will, and carries him to success. As our discussion of this question originated with the advice we gave to women to pray for congenial partners in life, we may as well say that such an object of prayer is, as far as we know, a very rare one. As a rule, prayers are offered up for all kinds of possible and impossible advantages—such as our daily bread, salvation, conversion, consolation, success in business, change in the weather, &c. No one thinks of praying for a good husband or a good wife, and yet—if all we have told you about prayer and the aid which spirits can render to man be true, of which you must form your own conclusions—how necessary is it to be sure that you are in a position to be independent of this aid before you ridicule it. According to our experience, and that of all other spirits, no duty comes more readily within the scope of a spirit guide than that of impressing people how to choose their friends; and in no respect could such services be rendered with a greater certainty of good results than in the task of selecting and preparing for each other's society those who are most fitted to marry. It would be a work which your spirit friends would enter upon with more joy and thankfulness than any other task you could impose upon them. You talk of marriages being made in heaven; but no marriage could be more truly made in heaven than one where the compatibility of the two partners for life had been previously

ascertained and approved of by their spirit friends. We speak feelingly on this subject, because, although the suggestion will probably excite ridicule in some minds, we know of one or two cases where it has been tried, and has been attended with the happiest results. Men talk of the idea of fortune-hunting and match-making as being derogatory to the dignity of the sex; but surely those who seek a fortune *in* a wife, and are above the selfishness of desiring a fortune *with* a wife, may be excused for asking aid from Him who made all men and women, and who knows, better than they, which are suited for being life partners. You cannot see that it is necessary to pray for any *particular* good, but imagine that a general prayer for benefits will embrace this amongst others; and that any detailed statement of wants must be superfluous. We have already explained to you that prayer is like advertising in the newspapers. You make known your wants to those in the spirit world who take a pleasure in responding to requests of the kind you put forth; just as some specially learned men among you take a pleasure in imparting to inquirers the knowledge which is their particular forte. These "spirits"—*men*, we call them—have, it may be, peculiar means of knowledge on the subjects that you pray for, and so they respond to the call more readily. When, therefore, we tell you how multitudinous are the victims of ill-fated marriages who are to be found in the spirit world—still suffering the terrible consequences of their former folly—you can easily imagine that, as they obtain relief and happiness in *their*

sufferings by rendering that aid to others which they are best qualified to give; they readily respond to prayers for help in the direction we have pointed out. *Since the whole future welfare of the human race depends upon the knowledge which guides the present generation in the selection of their partners for life*—these being necessarily the progenitors of the next generation—how all important must this question appear to those who calmly consider it. Let those scoff who choose. The punishment of their unbelief will fall on their own heads most assuredly, if they neglect the advice we have given them in the selection of partners for life.

Let us now revert to the question of providential interference in the affairs of every-day life. It is a popular fancy with some people, that such a thing is possible; whilst others hold that it is an absurd superstition. We have shown you that spirits can and do answer prayer—that is, they impress you to do their wishes. You think you are free agents; but, as a matter of fact, you merely act according to the thoughts that are in your head at the time, and we tell you that we have the power to put those thoughts there, be they good or evil. We do not mean to say that all thoughts are given to you by spirits. This is not the case, for you may have original thoughts in no way connected with anything spirits may have told you. Whence these original thoughts proceed we are unable to say any more than we can tell you whence the soul of man proceeds. They need not necessarily be from God, simply because they do not

originate with us; for, of course, that would imply that all original thoughts must be *good*, which we need hardly tell you is absurd. Again, you may ask whence do spirits derive *their* thoughts? They are but men and women like you; consequently, must be subject to similar laws. We are equally ignorant on this point also. This may strike you as extraordinary ignorance on our part, but you must recollect that we are not omniscient. We know a little more than you do, because we have an enlarged experience, but that is all. We do not ask you to accept our teaching as infallible, but if you are in doubt, pray for more light, and you will get it.

Spirits have, as we observed, the power to introduce thoughts into your brain. This they do by whispering in your ear,—that is into the ear of the spirit body, not the material body. The spirit body, as already stated, is asleep, so to speak, whilst the material body is awake; hence we can only communicate with the spiritual body in a peculiar manner. You have heard it said that if you whisper in the ear of a sleeping man you will make him dream of what you have whispered. This may be true or not, but, if so, the case is precisely the same as our mode of communicating thoughts to the semi-conscious spirit body, whence they penetrate into the brain of the physical body; and are used by the owner as his own ideas. Thus you see, you are always in communication with the spirit world, though you know it not; and if you will take the trouble to inquire of any man who has had the experience of impressional mediumship, you will find that the words

come into his head one after another as distinctly as if they were being dictated by a person in the flesh. This proves that they must emanate from an outside intelligence; and if a man can sit down and write off by the hour, without knowing what is coming next, he must be simply an impressional medium, let him call himself what he will. If he has to originate the thoughts himself, and form them into words and sentences, before he can put them down, he will find that it is a much slower process than he has been accustomed to. Should he doubt what we have said, let him beg the question for a moment; grant the existence of the supposed spirit, and ask the latter to give him a test of what we are saying by withdrawing the thoughts from his mind. Should he find, after making such a request, that he is no longer able to proceed during a short interval, he may be sure that he is what is called, in spiritualist parlance, an impressional medium. We hope he will not consider it derogatory to his dignity to come under such a category; for, as a matter of fact, all the most brilliant geniuses of any age have been such. They could not have originated the ideas which are conveyed by the works of men like Shakespeare, Spenser, Milton, Dante, Plato, Aristotle, and others, unless the writers or speakers had been inspired by men from the spirit world. This is the secret of all inspiration. We see it at work in every-day-life, just the same. From the spirit side—seen behind the scenes, as it were—the process is so simple and commonplace, that he who runs may read; but, with you, it is of course scouted

as one of the delusions of those weak-minded creatures, the Spiritualists. The spirit world is tolerant of your eccentricities. We know your weak points, and we humour them; so we pocket the insult, and work away in spite of it all. We have much to tell you for your own good: it makes us happy to impart knowledge; hence we seek out—like the scientific men we have told you of—an impressional mind amongst you, and pour into his brain the thoughts which we are full of. He takes all the credit of their utterance in your world; but as it is only temporarily, we do not mind it. When he comes into the spirit world, he finds his mistake out, and is obliged to admit that he is not such a genius as he thought he was. Then he has to take his proper place in the world of thought, and perhaps he may be dissatisfied. If so, he, of course, becomes unhappy; and until his pride of intellect is subdued, he cannot rise.

There are many men in the spirit world who, with you, were considered great geniuses, but who are now robbed of all the splendour which was not theirs. If they ever succeed in communicating through mediums with those on the earth plane, you wonder at the trivial nature of their sentiments, and think, of course, that the medium is an impostor, because it is clear that Burns or Shakespeare could never have written such stuff as that. Alas! how are the mighty fallen. When the spirit world reveals to them how little they really were, and how useless have been their attempts at self-glorification, they begin to be wiser and sadder men.

Let us now turn from the subject of spiritual impressions—or inspirations, as you on earth prefer to call it—to the question of special providence, or luck, as it is sometimes called.

When we state that the soul of man is the arbiter of his destinies, we mean to say that he has the shaping of his future in his own hands. The soul is the gift of the Almighty. We do not know whence it comes; though we know whither it goes after it has severed its connection with the body. The term "soul," as already stated, is used as expressing the spirit that dwells in the spirit body. It is not the spirit body merely that constitutes the spiritual being. Since we are so ignorant about the origin of the soul, with all our enlarged experience, we are the more amazed to find that theologians are prepared to lay down an explanation which, to their minds, may seem perfectly satisfactory, but, to our thinking, is suggestive of an unwarranted confidence in their own capacity to fathom the mysteries of creation. How can finite man solve the infinite? We can tell you where you are to live after death, but we cannot tell you whence you came; hence all speculation on this subject is alike unprofitable for you and for us. Should we deny that your means of information are adequate to support the conclusions you arrive at, we think that, from our point of view, we are justified in believing so; for we *are* able to observe the process of creating a living soul, so far as its first entrance into the body is concerned, whilst you are not so privileged. In this view of the case, we think our conclusions are sounder

and more reasonable than yours. All that we or you can know of the subject is, that the act which gives birth to the soul—whatever its previous state of existence, if any, may have been—is a simple act of generation common to all animals. We do not propose to discuss this subject further than we find necessary to show you how futile must be the speculations of science and theology on the question of man's origin. We might trace back the history of man on the face of the globe to those primeval times, when he wandered over the surface of the earth, little removed above the condition of the dumb animal. This has already been done by other writers from the the spirit world ; and, therefore, since it is foreign to our subject, and not particularly profitable, we prefer to leave it where it is. Having said thus much about the origin of man, let us revert again to his destiny. There be those amongst you who pretend to be able to foretell the destiny of man, and say that so and so is destined to be a great orator, another a great writer, a third a great musician, and so on. We think there is no such thing as destiny in the sense that any fixed rule of conduct is laid down for any man. Some think they are destined always to be unlucky ; whilst others wonder at the luck of their friends, which seems likewise a mark of destiny. The subject, from your point of view, is necessarily very mysterious, because you ignore one important element in the way the affairs of men are shaped ; and that is the interference of spirits who ally themselves with those on earth. This "spirit power" is only another name for *will power* ;

for it is in no sense more distinguishable by the name of spirit power in our world than in yours, seeing that you are all quite as much spirits as we are. In our eyes, in fact, it is *you* who are called the spirits ; whilst we call ourselves men and women. To avoid confusion, however, we have in these pages preferred to denote our humble selves as the spirits, and you for once, as the men and women ; since you cannot understand it otherwise.

It is common for men and women to be under the delusion that they are the creatures of destiny—that the finger of Providence may be traced in their daily affairs—and if a sparrow falls from the house-top, it is owing to the direct interference of the Almighty, and it is impious to assert that any one could have prevented the said sparrow from so falling, since it was *predestined* to happen. All men do not think so absurdly, but a considerable number do practically ; that is, they hold these views in other cases quite as trifling. If a man falls in the street, it is “just his luck ;” and if, instead of falling, he gets a rise in the world, he thinks it is his luck again. His friends who are less profane think it is the “will of Providence ;” but these are convertible terms ; what one person calls luck, another calls Providence. We do not mean to say there is no such thing as Providence in the world. God’s laws are omnipotent, and pervade the whole universe ; consequently, if a sparrow or a man falls, he does so in accordance with some law of nature—the law of gravity, it may be—which, of course, is only another convertible term for the laws of God.

All we wish to point out is, that there are no *special* interferences by God with his own laws. He does not require special providences to produce special events. They occur in accordance with laws that are common to all ages and all times, and if a miracle could be performed eighteen centuries ago, so also by the same laws could it be performed now-a-days, if the conditions under which it took place were the same in both cases. These are statements that no enlightened mind can reject, so we may claim your acquiescence in the conclusion that, *if* spirits can and do interfere in the affairs of men, not by controlling matter, but by controlling your spirits through your minds—such being the media by which alone they can reach *your* matter—there is, therefore, no difficulty in explaining why or how an event may happen amongst you, which, at first glance, seems such an extraordinary coincidence as to be little less than a “providential interference.” We, who see these “providential interferences” in operation every day amongst you, may be excused if we fail to see the distinction between a human interference and a providential interference of this kind. Matter is usually controlled by spirit, whether it be the Spirit of God breathing through nature’s laws, or the Spirit of God in man. If you take up a chair, it is matter controlled by the spirit within you ; for, of course, the matter of your body is merely the agent of the spirit within. Hence, if you hear of matter in the form of clothes, money, and food, being sent to a man in answer to his prayers, as you do in the case of George Müller’s Orphanage at Bris-

tol, where you have one man providing by his will-power, or prayers, for the wants of 2000 orphan children, you have a case simply of matter controlled by spirits, in the same sense that you have it when you move the chair. The *modus operandi* we know to be as follows, for we have watched it: the person praying simply calls to his aid spirits—that is, men and women—who sympathise with his work; in short, he may be said to advertises for them. The difference between him and others, who solicit your charitable contributions, is that he advertises in the spiritual world, and other men advertise in the natural world. We have called it advertising simply to convey an idea to your mind that you can comprehend, but in reality it is nothing of the kind; it is an earnest appeal by spirit power to those whose necessities—as spirits seeking their own development—require that they should lend help of this kind. Hence you see it is a mutual benefit, not a one-sided one. “It is more blessed to give than to receive,” is a saying whose meaning few of you understand as well as we do.

Let us now turn once more to our friend, the praying medium, if we call him so. He seeks God’s aid, and he gets it, though not perhaps in the way he imagines. The spirit world being full of unhappy men and women, who require to be benefited by doing work of the kind this person can supply them with; they eagerly avail themselves of his services. He benefits them as much as he benefits the children; thus, you see, he may be said “to kill two birds with

one stone." The mode in which his prayers are answered is simple enough. They listen to his requests, and forthwith go to seek some impressible individual in the flesh, whom they can induce to contribute the amount or thing required. They may have some difficulty in finding the proper person, but when once found they can come to him again; hence they soon form a sort of connection amongst the philanthropic, and go to them for help whenever their employer needs assistance. They are, therefore, merely canvassers for a man on earth, who gives them employment, for which they are rewarded by God in the inner satisfaction and increase of happiness, which they experience as a consequence of their good work. Their consciences reward them, and conscience is merely another name for the voice of God within you. Many persons define conscience to be the capacity to determine between right and wrong. We agree that this is, to some extent, a true definition, but you must remember that that capacity is at all times both in your world and in ours so overclouded and warped by circumstances that, as we said, all men are more or less insane in regard to right and wrong. They all more or less conceive that what they do and think is right, and if they *were* all right, of course there would be no difference of opinion in the world; but as we know that this happy condition does not yet prevail on the earth—spiritual or material—it follows that all men are more or less distorted in their mental vision. Conscience is nevertheless at work beneath all the madness or error that overclouds man's moral

vision. Deep down in the recesses of the soul the voice of conscience is ever crying for deliverance from the weight of sin and wretchedness that presses upon it. Sooner or later it asserts its right to be heard. It may not be in your world; it may be many years before even it does so in the spirit world; but the time *does* come in all cases, and then begins the time when man feels happier, and strives after that which is true and right, in place of the error which he had formerly worshipped under the name of truth.

Closely allied with special providences may be mentioned the case of untoward events,—such as earthquakes, fires, wars, pestilences, and famines. These are all looked upon as special visitations of Providence, but they are no more so than the cases we have alluded to. It is true that they are not brought about by the agency of spirits—at least, with the exception of wars, and sometimes, in rare cases, fires—but they are the result of the operation of nature's laws, and may be classed under the same category as private illnesses. It is true we do not understand the causes, but neither do we know the reason why we have fevers or diseases. They come; and we study their causes and effects, and try to find out the remedy. So should we also do with the former calamities, instead of attributing them to the action of an angered Deity. Having thus explained one or two peculiarities in every-day events which appear inexplicable to you, let us revert to the question of spiritual interference in the affairs of men. We have told you that men in the spirit world amuse

themselves, so to speak, by attaching themselves to those in the body, because they find the latter are more interesting, and lead lives that are more crowded with incident, than the lives of those you call spirits. Life in the spirit world—not only in the earth plane, but also in the higher spheres—is less exciting than with you, because excitement always means an unhealthy condition of things, and, with us, there is more peace, more love, and less contention; consequently our lives are less interesting, from a worldly point of view. You love change and novelty; and unless you can have a life of excitement, you are not happy. True happiness, however, in our opinion, is to be found rather in calm contentment than in change and turmoil. All nature is perpetually striving to reach this state; hence the mountain stream rushes down to the plain, and in hundreds of other ways the earth is always striving to readjust its elements, so as to arrive at a state of greater tranquility. Man is no exception to the rule. By wars and pestilences and famines, he is constantly being taught his lessons in life, which all point to the higher pleasures derivable from a life of calm contentment as being superior to the enmity and turbulence so characteristic of his present mode of life.

As before stated, the soul determines its own line of future action, inasmuch as it decides what condition of life it shall exist in by the direction of its aspirations. A man who is always aspiring to be better than he is will inevitably become so, on the principle that prayer, or will-power, is the operative influence which shapes

our future careers. So, on the other hand, a man, who is content through life to remain what he is, will never rise into any other position, until new thoughts and aspirations are quickened into being by contact with life in the next world. If a youth is to become a great man, depend upon it you cannot impress upon him too early the necessity of *striving* mentally and morally to be such. He is much more likely to succeed if his will-power is awakened and brought into play, than if he is merely told to do his duty, and *hope* for the best, because hoping is not willing; and though it may be indicative of a firm faith in the existence of Divine justice and foresight, yet it fails to rouse the energies so well as the earnest longing which is supported by a determination to succeed in spite of obstacles. Now, when a man turns his attention to any task, with a determination to master it, he is tolerably certain to do so; hence you see how important it is, in early life, to impress upon pupils the cultivation of the will. It causes all oppressed nations to succeed in ultimately obtaining their freedom. In cases where the people have been constantly hoping and longing for it, that desire finally begets determination, and ultimately victory. The bearing of these matters on our subject is this,—namely, that inasmuch as will-power is the all-pervading force in the universe, so is it also the lever by which all events in daily life are brought about, and your future career therefore is not shaped by destiny or Providence, but by *your own will*. This is a very important matter for the world to appreciate, though you may not see

it at present. When you know more of the working of will-power from the spirit world in conjunction with your world, you will see how significant is the fact that will-power is superior to the power of what you call chance, destiny, or providence. There is no such thing as chance in the universe; everything happens according to natural law, and consequently, if any particular phenomenon is under the control of a human will, it is equally under natural law. You may not see the human will in operation, but it is there nevertheless, whether in the spirit world or in yours.

Now that we have shown you that there are causes at work, which the human understanding on earth, in its present state of knowledge, is unprepared to comprehend; it may be well to state that there are also causes which *we* know not of. We can only see a step further beyond you on earth, but there are many steps further still, which we cannot take. In the same way that we influence you in ways that you think indicative of Divine providence, so are we also influenced by higher spirits, who, in turn, are under the control of still higher beings, and thus ever upward to the great Author of all things. We are no more able to understand all things than you are. A little further into the mysteries of nature we may be able to penetrate, but not much. We can tell you what we know, or rather what we think you can comprehend; but there is much that we are ourselves taught by others, which would not be fit food for your understandings, and, therefore, we are compelled, for the present, to with-

hold it. Christ told his disciples there were many things to tell them, but they were not ready yet. He could have told them much of that which the world is, after eighteen centuries of time, only now beginning to understand; but it would have been more unintelligible to his hearers than even the little he did tell them. Christ refrained from disclosing things, which to him must have been as familiar as household words, simply because they were not suitable to the times in which he lived. Whether the world is any more prepared to hear these things now, will, perhaps, be known before long, since there will be a great outpouring of spiritual truths in the future, of which, perhaps, we may claim the honour of conveying a small instalment in the present pages. When we have discovered that there is a demand for more light on these and other subjects, we shall be happy to supply it. For the present we prefer to draw our sketch of life in the first sphere of the spirit world to a close.

We have, in the foregoing pages, attempted to give only a short outline of the life beyond the grave. Enough remains to be told to fill several volumes. Indeed, to convey to you all that we could tell would fill a library. When a man has been fifty years in the spirit world, he has had time to collect facts and information sufficient, with ordinary diligence, to supply literary matter for a good number of books.

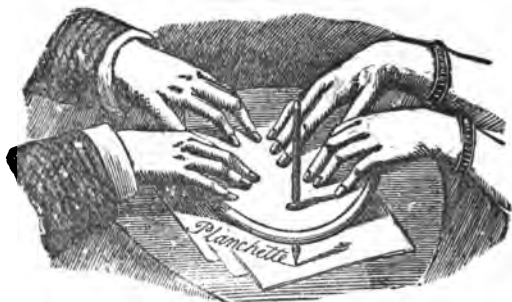
Before concluding, it may be as well to glance once more at the main teachings of the foregoing articles. We have told you how the spirits who frequent your

seances behave at your circles, and how you behave to them. We have shewn you something of the nature of the spirit world on the earth plane. As to the Summer-land and the higher spirit spheres you have had some descriptions of them in other works, but of the life on the earth plane, which is much more interesting for persons in the flesh, very little information is given to the world. This is owing to the fact that many persons (or spirits) know so little about it ; they know their own experiences in it but not the general aspect of affairs. There is no public press with us. We, or rather the spirits on the earth plane, read your papers but never see any news that does not exclusively relate to persons in the flesh. How then can they give you general information touching the spirit world on the earth plane? We have explained to you what their powers of locomotion are. Of course there are many travellers amongst them, but they do not all know how to communicate, and then you do not know what to ask about, because you, on earth, are yourselves so densely ignorant about the nature of the spirit world that most people do not seem to understand whether spirits have any bodies or not, and never realize the fact that there is a spirit world round about you, quite as solid and substantial (to those who inhabit it) as your world ; and peopled, moreover, by persons who lead the same kind of lives as yourselves. We have told you about the earth sphere, but we could also have explained to you the nature and surroundings of the higher spheres if we had been disposed, since we are well acquainted with both. We

will let the public know something more another time if the present papers are well received. At present the sketch before you is sufficient to afford abundant food for thought to those who take any interest in the immortality of the soul.



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The point of the pencil being placed on a piece of paper (double crown printing paper is the best), two persons should rest one or both their hands lightly upon Planchette, and having asked some question, wait patiently for a short time, taking care not to impart any motion whatever to the instrument.

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There are, however, some people for whom it will not write, and some few for whom it will not even move; but in every company of five or six there will almost certainly be several for whom it will write.

When it is a long time before moving, it is well not to weary the hands, but to rest them a few moments, and then apply them again.

It is well too at first to ask such questions as can be answered in a single word, such as "yes," "no," or initials and numbers, and afterwards, if successful, such as require a longer answer.

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